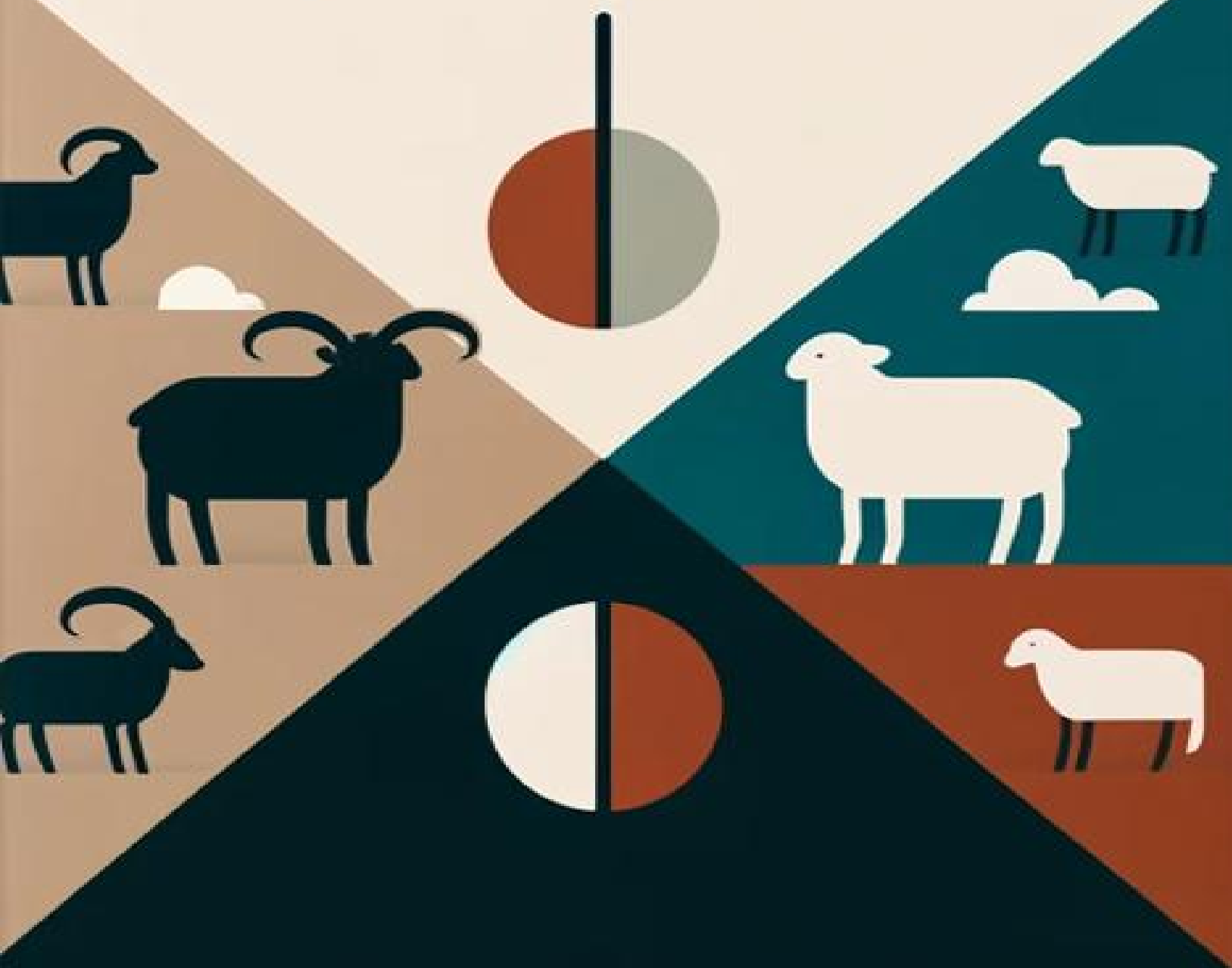


"...and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.— Matthew 25:33.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

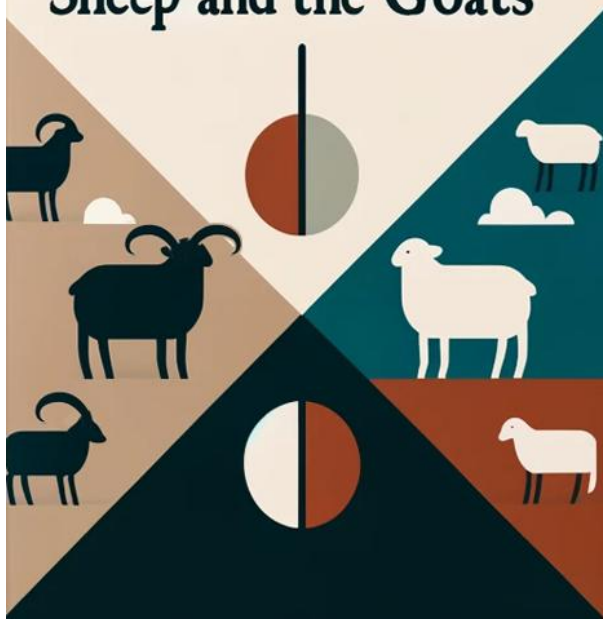


11 Sermons on Matthew 25:30-46

THOMAS MANTON

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The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

by Thomas Manton

SERMON I

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—MAT. 25:30.

IN these words is the positive part of the sentence; the master doth not only take away the talent, but condemneth him to eternal torments. In them take notice—(1.) Of the reason of the punishment; and then, (2.) The punishment itself.

1. The reason of the punishment is represented in the notion and character by which the party sentenced is expressed, 'The unprofitable servant.' The word unprofitable is sometimes used in a larger, and sometimes in a stricter sense. In a larger sense it is used for him that deserveth no reward; so it is said, Luke 17:10, 'We are

unprofitable servants.' Sometimes more strictly and properly for the idle and the negligent, for them that do not their duty, and make no improvement of their gifts. So it is taken here, and in many other places; καὶ τὸν ἀχρεῖον δοῦλον ἐκβάλλετε, 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant.'

2. The punishment itself is represented by two notions:—

[1.] It is dismal, 'Cast him into utter darkness.'

[2.] It is doleful, 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

First, Dismal; εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον. (2.) It is doleful; ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων. Sometimes hell is expressed by one of these notions; as Mat. 13:42, 'He will cast the tares into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;' so Mat. 24:51, 'He shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' It is notable, that is the punishment of the luxurious servant, that did eat and drink with the drunken, and beat his fellow-servants; and here the unprofitable servant is threatened with the same, though he was not riotous, but negligent. Sometimes by both together; as Mat. 8:11, 12, 'The children of the kingdom shall be cast into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;' and Mat. 22:13, 'Take him away, and cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Now, let us first consider the punishment as it is dismal, 'Cast him into utter darkness.' There are two terms to be explained—darkness, and utter darkness.

1. Darkness. Heaven is set forth by light, and hell by darkness. The inheritance of the saints is called an 'inheritance in light,' Col. 1:12,

because that is an estate full of knowledge; for there we 'see God face to face,' 1 Cor. 13:12; an estate full of joy and comfort, Ps. 16:11; an estate full of brightness and glory: Dan. 12:3, 'They shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever;' Mat. 13:43, 'The righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of heaven.' How base soever the children of God appear in this world, in the world to come they shall be wonderful glorious. Now the opposite state of this is set forth by darkness; as the fallen angels are said to be 'held in chains of darkness,' 2 Peter 2:4; or as Jude hath it, in 'chains under darkness,' Jude 6. Hell is compared to a prison or dungeon, 1 Peter 3:19. So Christ speaketh of hell as the prison wherein damned spirits are held in a wretched and comfortless estate, in a state most remote from joy and blessedness.

2. It is called utter darkness, either because their prisons or dungeons were out of the city, as appeareth Acts 12:10, or because they shall be shut from the feast or rooms of entertainment. Their feasts were usually kept by night; suppers, and not dinners; and then celebrated with a great many lamps and candles or torches. Now, those that were not only shut out from those rooms of entertainment, but cast into dungeons, were left in a comfortless condition. That it is opposite to the feast, these two places, Mat. 8:12, and Mat. 20:13, show. And here, when the good servants 'enter into the master's joy,' or sit down and feast with him, then is the naughty servant 'cast into utter darkness;' that is, shut out of the communion of the blessed spirits (who in the place of happiness have eternal joy), and cast into the dungeon of hell.

Secondly, Let us consider it as it is doleful, 'Where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Their estate shall be sad, and they shall have a bitter apprehension of it. Their apprehension is expressed by two things—their sorrow and indignation.

1. Their desperate tormenting sorrow, ἐκεῖ κλαυθμὸς, 'weeping.' This dolour shall arise from the inexplicable torments of body and soul.

2. Their indignation or vexation, 'gnashing of teeth.' It is a token of indignation and impatience; as Acts 7:54, 'When they heard these things, they were cut at the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth.' I shall explain it more by and by. Two points will arise hence:

—

Doct. 1. That hell is a place and state of inexpressible torments.

Doct. 2. That unprofitableness is a damning sin.

The unprofitable servant is condemned, though he did not waste his master's goods, yet because he did not increase them. There is no treachery laid to his charge, no riot and wasteful profusion, no opposition to his fellow-servants, to vex or hinder them in their work. We hear nothing of this laid to his charge; but he neglected to do that which is good.

For the first point, that hell is a place and state of inexpressible torment, the argument may seem harsh and ingrate, but this is part of the doctrine that we must unfold. See the commission of the ministers of the gospel: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' It is gospel preaching to warn men of damnation; we must curse, as well as bless; and this part of doctrine hath its profit, as well as the more comfortable.

1. To those that are carnal, to rouse them out of their security. If men did believe the torments of hell, they would not sin as they do. Sermons of hell may keep many out of hell. *Ne fugiamus sermones de Gehenna, ut Gehennam fugiamus.* John startled many by pressing

them 'to flee from wrath to come.' And it is God's usual course to bring to heaven by the gates of hell.

2. To God's children; partly that they may know what they have escaped, to be the more thankful to their Redeemer. We were all involved in this condemnation; and it is the Lord's mercy that we are 'as brands plucked out of the burning,' Zech. 3:2. A child of God is a firebrand of hell quenched, Eph. 2:3. It was the pity of our Lord Jesus to rescue us, 1 Thes. 1:10. It is a part of a christian's heaven to think of hell. The miseries of this life commend heaven to us; much more the torments of hell. We know good the better by the opposite evil; as the Israelites, when they looked back, and saw the Egyptians tumbling in the waters, it heightened the deliverance, and made them the more sensible of their own safety. And partly to warn them, and quicken them to their duty. This motive alone would beget slavish fear and compulsory obedience; but mixed with others, it doth good. We need this discipline as long as we are in the world. We are flesh as well as spirit. Adam in innocency needed to be threatened and told of death. Paul saith, 1 Cor. 9:27, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' If so sanctified a man as Paul, much more we; and Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' It is one of the saints' motives. And partly because they that cannot endure to hear of such discourses discover much of the guilt and security of their own hearts. As Ahab said of Michaiah, 'He prophesicth nothing but evil,' so men say of many of the preachers of the gospel (that yet speak with tenderness and compassion), He preacheth nothing but hell and damnation. Presumption is a coward and a runaway; but faith meeteth its enemy in open field: Ps. 23:4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet I will fear no evil.' It supposeth the worst; it can

encounter the greatest terrors; but a false unsound peace is a tender thing, loath to be touched, cannot endure a few sad and sober thoughts of the world to come, as sore eyes cannot endure the light. I shall only speak of this dreadful place and estate as it cometh under the view of this text, leaving a more full discussion of this point to the 41st verse of this chapter.

1. That there is a hell, or everlasting torments prepared for the wicked. It is good to prove a hated truth strongly. Now, it is so, that there is a hell, if God, or man, or devils be competent witnesses in the case. God hath ever told the world of it, and his witness is true. In the Old Testament but sparingly, because the state of the world to come was reserved as a discovery fit for the times of the gospel, 2 Tim. 1:10; yet there God speaketh, Deut: 32:22, of a 'fire kindled in his anger, that shall burn to the lowest hell.' God's wrath is represented by fire, which is an active instrument of destruction; and the seat and residence of it is in the lowest hell. So Ps. 11:6, 'Upon the wicked shall he rain snares, fire, and brimstone.' See more, ver. 41.

2. Let us see it described here.

First, As a dismal state, 'Cast them out into utter darkness;' that is— (1.) Shut them out of the feast; and (2.) Cast them into the dungeon of hell. There they shall be deprived of all consolation and joy and happiness. As—

1. Of the sight of God, the company of the good angels and blessed spirits; to which loss there is added the most inexplicable torments of body and soul, which is exceeding great. And it is a dreadful thing to be deprived of the light of God's countenance, to be banished out of his presence. The disciples wept when Paul said, 'Ye shall see my face no more,' Acts 20:38. What will the damned do when he shall say, 'Depart, ye cursed,' as it is in the 41st verse? Here in the loss all are

equal, but not in the pain; all alike depart from God; they all lose heaven's joys, the favourable presence of God, and the sight of Christ, the company of the blessed, and their abode in those happy mansions in Christ's Father's house. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the sunshine of God's presence never cometh. God is summum bonum, the chiefest good; and in the other world, omne bonum, all in all. All things there are immediately from God, rewards and punishments. Better lose all things than God: Exod. 33:15, 'If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.'

Object. But is it any grief to the wicked to want God, from whom they have such an extreme averseness and hatred?

Ans. They are sensible of the loss of happiness; their judgment is changed, though not renewed. Fogs of error, atheism, and unbelief then vanish; they are confuted by experience. There are no atheists in hell; they know there is a God, and that all happiness consists in the full enjoyment of him; which happiness they have lost by their own folly, as by their bitter experience they can find, being in a place most remote from him: therefore, as rational creatures, they cannot but be sensible of their loss; and that sense must needs breed sadness and dejection of spirit; being they look not upon God as lovely in himself, but as one that might be profitable to them: *oculos quos occlusit culpa, aperiet pœna*. It would lessen their torments if their understandings might be taken away: they know what it is to want God, though their hatred of him still remaineth.

2. The sight of Christ. They had a glimpse before they went into hell, by the glory of his presence: 2 Thes. 1:9, 'They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.' That short experience of Christ's appearing will remain in their minds to all eternity; it will stick by them. How are they thrust out? Christ

himself, who hath the keys of death and hell, shall bid them go; as if he had said, I cannot endure your presence.

3. From the company of the blessed: Luke 13:28, 'There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.' Envy is a great part of their punishment, as well as horror: Luke 16:27, 'And being in torments, he lift up his eyes, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.' It is a torment to think that others of the same nature, interests, instruction, do enjoy what they have forfeited.

4. From an abode in the palace of heaven: Rev. 22:15, 'Without shall be dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' If the pavement of heaven is glorious, what will the place itself be? And from this glorious place they are banished.

Secondly, This utter darkness implieth positively a state of woe and misery most remote from this blessedness; for as they are shut out of the palace of heaven, so they are cast into the prison of hell, where all is dark, without hope of ever coming out more: 2 Peter 2:17, 'To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.' Hell is a region upon which the sun shall never shine. They know they shall never be reconciled to God, nor their punishment ended or lessened: 'Their worm shall never die, their fire shall never be quenched,' Mark 9:44. They can never hope to be admitted into God's presence more. There are many ups and downs in a christian's experience. God hideth his face sometimes, that he may show it afterwards the more gloriously. The church prayeth, Ps. 80:19, 'Turn again, and cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon us, and we shall be saved.' But this is an everlasting darkness. God doth, as it were, by chains hold them

under everlasting torments. It is a curse that shall never be reversed, a comfortless life that shall never have an end. Men might lose the face of God if they were annihilated; but the souls of men and women do not go to nothing, or die as their bodies, but subsist in a dolesome miserable state of darkness, and in the place of everlasting imprisonment, where the devils and damned spirits torment one another. All here are kept safe, without any possibility of escaping; here God holdeth them in everlasting chains.

Now this is just; they that rejected the light are thrust into utter darkness. They reject the light of the gospel: John 3:19, 'Men love darkness more than light.' They despise the light of glory, in comparison of worldly things and present satisfactions: Ps. 106:24, 'They despised the good land.' They forsake God and their own happiness; that which is now their sin is then their misery. They first excommunicated God, Job 22:17, and that for a trifle. They think his presence a torment: Mat. 8:20, 'What have we to do with thee? art thou come to torment us before the time?' Rom. 1:28, 'They did not like to retain God in their knowledge.' They could not endure to think of God, and abhorred their own thoughts of God, that they were their burden.

Secondly, It is a doleful place and state. Here are two notions, the one expressing their grief and sorrow, the other their vexation and indignation.

1. Their grief and sorrow. In hell there is nothing but sorrow and fear, overwhelming sorrow and despairing fear: it is a helpless and hopeless grief. Carnal men are prejudiced against godly sorrow; but that is useful and profitable, 2 Cor. 7:10. These sorrows would prevent those that the damned suffer in hell. The sorrows of repentance are joys in comparison of these sorrows; the sorrows of

repentance are full of hope. God will afford comforts to his mourners; but the sorrows of the damned are heightened by their own desperations; it is for ever and ever. These are small, those swallow us up; these are curing, those tormenting; here it is like pricking a vein for health, hereafter wounds to the heart. These are mixed with love: Luke 7, she that loved much, wept much. The cup of wrath is unmixed, confounding and overwhelming us with continual amazement. These are short, those endless.

2. Their vexation and indignation. The grinding and the gnashing of the teeth is usually in pain or rage, in pain of body and soul. But of that afterwards, when I come to speak of hell under the notion of everlasting fire. Now, as it is a token and effect of rage. Now the damned are represented as full of rage, blasphemy, and indignation against God, against the saints, and against themselves.

[1.] Against God; they have despised his favour, and now feel the power of his justice and displeasure against them, and have still an implacable hatred against him. We see in Rev. 16:9, when they were 'scorched with great heat, they blasphemed the name of God, which had power over these plagues; and repented not, to give glory to God: they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their deeds.' I know that this prophecy doth not concern the state of the wicked in hell, but their plagues and disappointments in this world. However the fashion and guise of the reprobate is to be observed, here when they will not repent, so there when they cannot repent. Like men distracted and mad, they gnaw their tongues, and gnash their teeth; like mad dogs, that bite their chains, or wild bulls in a net or toil, that roar and foam. They will curse God that created, and sentenced them to this death; his power, by which they are continually tormented; his wisdom, by which he governeth the world; his goodness, that to them is turned into fury;

his Son's death and blood, which hath profited so many, and they have no benefit by it.

[2.] Against the saints. They hate them, and have an envy at all the felicity that betideth them in this world: Ps. 37:12, 'The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth at him with his teeth;' so Ps. 112:10, 'The horn of the righteous shall be exalted with honour: the wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away.' The godly are their opposite party; then their blessedness shall be so great that they shall envy their happiness when they see the godly in good case, and themselves miserable. At the great day the wicked shall see the believers' joy to the increase of their own sorrow.

[3.] Against themselves; their own hearts shall reproach them: Hosea 13:9, 'Thou hast destroyed thyself.' They shall rave and vex at their own past folly, past neglects, and past abuse of grace, and past refusal of that happiness which others enjoy, when they find their own delights salted with the present curse. Little comfort and satisfaction shall they have, when they remember they came thither to avoid the tediousness of a few blessed duties.

Use. Is to shame us that we make no more preparation to escape this dreadful estate; or, in the language of the Holy Ghost, that we do not 'flee from wrath to come.' No motion can be earnest and speedy enough. There are two things that are very great wonders:—

1. That any man should reject the christian faith, so clearly promised in the predictions of the prophets, before it was revealed, and confirmed with such a number of miracles, when it was first set afoot, received among the nations by so universal a consent, in the learned part of the world, notwithstanding the meanness of the instruments employed in it; and perpetuated to us throughout so

many successions of ages, who have had experience of the truth of it. And yet still we have cause to complain: Isa. 53:1, 'Lord, who hath believed our report?' Some cannot outsee time and look beyond the grave: 1 Peter 1:9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off;' and 2 Peter 3:3, 'There shall come in the latter times seoffers, and mockers, walking after their own lusts.' Many dare not question the precepts of Christianity, because of their usefulness to human society and reasonable nature; they doubt of the recompenses, and yet have a secret fear of them, and seek to smother it by their incredulity and unbelief. But alas! it will not do. They scoff at others as simple and credulous; none so credulous as the atheist; there is a thousand to one against him: at least, if it prove true, in what a case are they? It will do them no hurt to venture upon probabilities until further assurance. What assurance would you have? Luke 16:30, 31, 'You have Moses and the prophets; if you believe not them, neither will you be persuaded if one came from the dead.' Will you give laws to heaven? God is not bound to make a sun for them to see that wilfully shut their eyes; yet that way what assurance would you have to prove this is no phantasm? Doth God need a lie to persuade you to your duty? But—

2. The greater miracle is that any should embrace the christian faith, and yet live sinfully and carelessly; that they should believe as christians, and yet live as atheists. You cannot drive a dull ass into the fire that is kindled before him: Prov. 1:17, 'Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.' How can men believe eternal torments, and yet with so much boldness and easiness run into the sins that do deserve them? Many times not compelled by any terror, nor asked or invited by any temptation, but of their own accord they tempt themselves, and seek out occasions of sinning. On the other side, can a man believe heaven, and do nothing for it? If we know that it will not be lost labour, there is all the reason we should not

grudge at it: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.'

Now there are three causes of this:—(1.) Unbelief; (2.) Inconsideration; (3.) Want of close application.

[1.] Want of a sound belief. Most men's faith is but pretended, as appeareth by the effects.

(1.) By our proneness to sin. If God did govern the world by sense, and not by faith, we should be other manner of persons than we are, in all holiness and godliness of conversation. If we were sure and certain that for every law we break, or for every one whom we deceive and slander, we should hold our hands in scalding lead for half an hour, how afraid would men be to commit any offence? Who would taste meat, if he knew there were present death in it? yea, that it would cost him bitter gripes and torments? How cautious are men of their diet that are prone to the stone, or gout or colick, where it is but probable the things we take will do us any hurt? We know certainly that 'the wages of sin is death,' yet how little are we concerned at sin!

(2.) By our backwardness to good works. Sins of omission will damn as well as sins of commission, small as well as great. It is not said, Ye have robbed, but, Ye have not fed, ye have not clothed; not, Ye have blasphemed, but, Ye have not invoked the name of God; not done hurt, but done no good: 'And cast the unprofitable servant,' &c.

(3.) By our weakness in temptations and conflicts. We cannot deny a carnal pleasure, yet we are told, Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' Nor withstand a carnal fear, yet we are told, Mat. 10:28, 'Fear not him that can kill the body, but fear him that can cast both

body and soul into hell.' But shrink at the least pains of duty, when we are told on the one hand, 1 Cor. 15:58, 'That our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord;' on the other side, Rev. 21:8, 'That the fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.' On the other side, that it is the most irrational thing to go to hell to save ourselves the labour of obedience. The whole world promised for a reward cannot induce us to enter into a fiery furnace for half an hour. If one much desiring sleep, which is Chrysostom's supposition, should be told that if he once nodded he should endure ten years' torment, would he venture?

(4.) By our carelessness in the matters of our peace. If we were in danger of death every moment, we would not be quiet till we got a pardon. All men by nature are children of wrath, liable to this horrible estate that hath been described to you; but yet few run for refuge, Heb. 6:18, 19, nor 'flee from wrath to come,' Mat. 3:7. Seek 'peace upon earth,' Luke 2:14. Labour 'to be found of him in peace,' 2 Peter 2:14. How can a man be at rest, till he be secured, and can bless God for an escape?

[2.] Want of serious consideration. The scripture calleth for it everywhere: Ps. 50:22, 'Consider this, ye that forget God;' and Isa. 1:3, 'My people will not consider.' Many that have faith do not act it, and set it a-work by lively thoughts. When faith and knowledge are asleep, it differeth little from ignorance or oblivion, till consideration awaken it. Carnal sensualists put off that they cannot put away, Amos 6:3. Many that know themselves wretched creatures are not troubled at it, because they cast these things out of their thoughts, and so they sleep; but their damnation sleepeth not, it lieth watching to take hold of them; they are not at leisure to think of eternity.

[3.] Want of close application: Rom. 8:31, 'What shall we then say to these things?' Job 5:27, 'Know this for thy good.' Whether promise or threatening, we must urge and prick our hearts with it. Self-love maketh us fancy an unreasonable indulgence in God, and that we shall do well enough, how slightly and carelessly soever we mind religion. We do not lay the point and edge of truths to our own hearts, and say, Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' These are the causes. Now there is no way to remedy this but to get a sound belief of the world to come, and often to meditate on it, and urge our own hearts with it.

Doct. 2. That unprofitableness is a damning sin.

If there were no more, this were enough to ruin us. By unprofitableness I do not mean want of success; to the best, gifts may be unprofitable: Isa. 49:4, 'I have laboured in vain,' saith the prophet Isaiah; but want of endeavour, omitting to do our duty. The scope of the parable is to awaken us from our negligence and sloth, that we may not prefer a soft and easy lazy life before the service of God, and doing good in our generation. Now, because we think omissions are no sins, or light sins, I shall take this occasion to show the heinousness of them; and here I shall show two things:—

First, That there are sins of omission. Sins are usually distinguished into sins of omission and commission. A sin of commission is when we do that which we ought not; a sin of omission, when we leave that undone which we ought to do. But when we look more narrowly into these things, we shall find both in every actual sin; for in that we commit anything against the law, we omit our duty, and the omitting of our duty can hardly or never fall out but that something is preferred before the love of God, and that is a commission. But yet there is ground for the distinction, because when anything is

formally and directly committed against the negative precept and prohibition, that is a sin of commission; but when we directly sin against an affirmative precept, that is an omission. We have an instance of both in Eli and his sons. Eli's sons defiled themselves 'with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,' 1 Sam. 2:22. Eli sinned in that 'he restrained them not,' 1 Sam. 3:13. His was an omission, theirs a commission.

Secondly, That sins of omission may be great sins appeareth—

1. Partly by the nature of them. There is in them the general nature of all evil; that is, ἀνομία, 'a transgression of a law,' 1 John 3:4; a disobedience and breach of a precept, and so by consequence a contempt of God's authority. We cry out upon Pharaoh when we hear him speaking, Exod. 5:2, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?' By interpretation we all say so; this language is couched in every sin that we commit, and every duty we omit. Our negligence is not simple negligence, but downright disobedience, because it is a breach of a precept; and the offence is the more, because our nature doth more easily close with precepts than prohibitions. Duties enjoined are perfective, but prohibitions are as so many yokes upon us. We take it more grievously for God to say, 'Thou shalt not covet,' than for God to say, 'Thou shalt love me, fear me, and serve me.' We are contented to do much which the law requireth, but to be limited and barred of our delights, this is distasteful. To meet with man's corruptions indeed, the decalogue consists more of prohibitions than precepts; eight negatives, the fourth and fifth commandments only positive. To be restrained is as distasteful to us as for men in a fever to be forbidden drink; nature is more prone to sin. But to return, there is much disobedience in a sin of omission. When Saul had not done what God bid him to do, he telleth him, 'Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry,' 1 Sam.

15:11; implying that omission is rebellion, and stubbornness parallel to idolatry and witchcraft.

2. Partly by the causes of them. The general cause is corrupt nature: 'They are all become unprofitable,' Rom 3:12, compared with Ps. 14:3, 'They are altogether become filthy.' There is in all by nature a proneness to evil, and a backwardness to good. Onesimus before conversion was unprofitable, good for nothing, Philem. v. 11; but grace made a change, make him useful in all his relations. The particular causes are—(1.) Idleness and security; they are loath to be held at work: Isa. 64:7, 'None stirreth up himself to lay hold on thee;' 'They forget his commandments,' Jer. 2:31, 32. (2.) Want of love to God: Isa. 43:22, 'Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel;' and Rev. 2:4, 'Nevertheless I have something against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' And (3.) Want of zeal for God's glory: 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,' Rom. 12:11. Where there is a fervour, we cannot be idle and neglectful of our duty. There is an aversion from God before there is an express disobedience to him.

3. Partly by the effects—internal, external, eternal.

[1.] Internal; gifts and graces languish for want of employment: 1 Thes. 5:19, 'Quench not the Spirit.' Thomas his omission made way for his unbelief, John 20:24.

[2.] External; it bringeth on many temporal judgments. God put by Saul from being king for an omission: 1 Sam. 15:11, 'It repenteth me for setting up Saul to be king, for he hath not done the thing that I commanded him;' forbearing to destroy all of Amalek. For this he put by Eli's house from the priesthood: 1 Sam. 3:13, 'I will judge his house for ever, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' Eli's omission is punished as well as his sons' commission, yet it was not a total omission. Compare 1 Sam. 2:23—

25, 'And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people; nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear of you; ye make the Lord's people to transgress: if one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not to the voice of their father.' His admonition was grave and serious, yet it was not enough. All Israel knew their sin before; Eli took upon him to reprove them secretly, whereas the fact was open, and he should have put them to open shame: and then his rebukes were mild and soft; he should have frowned upon them, punished them, but his fondness would not permit that.

[3.] Eternal, here in the text: 'Cast the unprofitable servant,' &c. These sins Christ will mainly inquire after at the day of judgment; and ver. 42, 43 of this chapter, and Mat. 7:19, 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire;' though not bad or poisonous fruit. By all these arguments it appeareth that sins of omission may be great sins.

Thirdly, That some sins of omission are greater than others. All are not alike, as the more necessary the duties, the more faulty the omission: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' 1 Cor. 16:22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' Not if a man hate, but if he love not, &c. These are peccata contra remedium, as others contra officium. By other sins we make the wound, by these we refuse the plaster. Again, if the omission be total: Jer. 10:25, 'Call not on the name of the Lord;' Ps. 14:3, 'None seeketh after God.' Again, when seasonable duties are neglected: Mat. 25:44, 'When I was an hungered ye fed me not;' 1 John 3:17, 'He that hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother in need;' Prov. 17:16, 'Why is there a price put into the hand of a fool?' And then when it is easy, this is to

stand with God for a trifle: Luke 16:24, *Desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam*; Amos 2:6, 'They sold the poor for a pair of shoes.' And when convinced of the duty: James 4:17, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'

Fourthly, In many cases sins of omission may be more heinous and more damning than sins of commission. (1.) They are the ruin of most part of the carnal world. Carnal men are often described by their omissions, 'To be without God,' Eph. 3:12; Ps. 10:3, 4, 'The wicked through the pride of their heart will not seek after God; God is not in all their thoughts;' Jer. 2:32, 'None stirreth up himself to seek after God.' And (2.) Partly because these are most apt to harden us more. Foul sins scourge the conscience with remorse and shame, but these bring on insensibly slightness and hardness of heart; and therefore Christ saith, publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of God before pharisees that rested in a superficial righteousness, but neglected faith, love and judgment, Mat. 21:31. And (3.) Partly because omissions make way for commission of evil: Ps. 14:4, 'They that called not upon God eat up his people like bread.' They lie open to gross sins that do not keep the heart tender by a daily attendance upon God. If a man do not that which is good, he will soon do that which is evil, John 2:13. Oh! then, let us bewail our unprofitableness, that we do no more good, that we do so much neglect God, and no more edify our neighbour, so that God's best gifts lie idle upon our hands.

Fifthly, The first and main evil of sin was in the omission: Jer. 2:13, 'My people have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters;' James 1:14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.' First enticed from God, and then drawn away to sin, therefore the work of grace is to 'teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,' Titus 2:12. By ungodliness is meant, not denying God,

but neglecting God; there our chief mischief began; for when we do not look upon God as our chief good, then we seek happiness in the creature.

Use 1. To show that if the unprofitable servant be cast into hell, what will become of them that live in open sins, that bid defiance to God?

2. To condemn the unprofitable lives of many; they live as if they had only their souls for salt to keep their bodies from stinking; cumber the ground, Luke 13:7; do not good in their relations, are neither comfortable to the bodies nor souls of others. Certainly how mean and low soever you be in the world, you may be useful. Dorcas made coats for the poor. Servants may adorn the gospel, Titus 2:10.

3. If sins of omission be so dangerous, we may cry out with David, Ps. 19, 'Who can understand his errors?' The children of God offend in these kind of sins oftener than in the other kind. They are not guilty of drunkenness or uncleanness, but of omission of good duties, or slight performance of them. Paul complaineth, Rom. 7:18, 19, 'For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not.' And should not you complain likewise? A child is not counted dutiful because he doth not wrong and beat his father; he must also give him that reverence that is due to him. Alas! how many duties are required of us to God and men, the neglect of which we should humble ourselves before God for!

SERMON II

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.—MAT. 25:31–33.

THIS latter paragraph I cannot call a parable, but a scheme and draught or a delineation of the last judgment, intermingled with many passages that are plainly parabolical; as that Christ setteth forth himself as a king sitting upon the throne of his glory, and as a shepherd dividing his flock; that he compareth the godly to sheep and the wicked to goats. Those allegations and dialogues between Christ and the righteous, Christ and the wicked, 'When saw we thee an hungry?' &c., have much of the nature of a parable in them. In these three verses we have described—

1. The appearance, or sitting down of the judge.
2. The presenting the parties to be judged. The former is in ver. 31, the latter in ver. 32, 33. In ver. 31 we have—

[1.] The person who shall be the judge, the Son of man.

[2.] The manner of his coming; it shall be august and glorious.

Where note—

- (1.) His personal glory, he shall come in his glory.
- (2.) His royal attendance, and all the holy angels with him.
- (3.) His seat and throne, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

First, The person is designed by this character and appellation, 'the Son of man.' He is called so to show that he is true man, and descended of the present race of men. He might have been true man if God had framed his substance out of nothing, as he did Adam out of the dust of the ground. And this title is given him here, as in many other places, when the last judgment is spoken of, as I shall show you by and by—

1. Partly to recompense his foregoing humiliation, or despicable appearance at his first coming.

2. Partly because of his second coming: he shall appear visibly in that nature as he went from us: Acts 1:11, 'In like manner,' &c. Christ shall come in the form of a man, but not in the same humble and mean appearance as now when he spake these things to them; for it is added for the manner—

[1.] For his personal glory, 'He shall come in his glory.' Not in the form of a servant, but becoming his present state. All infirmities shall be removed from his soul and body. It is not a borrowed glory, but he shall come in his own glory. It is said, Mat: 16:27, 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.' Here, in his own glory. The Son of man and the son of God is only one person; and his glory as God and his Father's glory is the same. So that he 'shall come in his glory,' noteth either—(1.) His divine power and majesty, which shall then conspicuously shine forth; or (2.) The glory put upon the human nature; and so it will note his plenary absolution as our surety. The Father sendeth him from heaven in power and great glory: 'He appeareth without sin,' Heb. 9:28. He doth not say, They that look for him shall be without sin; but 'He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation;' that is, fully discharged of our debt. First, he came in carnem; he showed himself in the nature of man to be

judged: then, in carne; he shall show himself in the nature of man to judge the world. At his first coming he was holy, yet in the garb of a sinner; we judged him as one forsaken of God: his second coming shall make it evident that he is discharged of the debt he took upon himself.

[2.] His royal attendance. The angels shall attend him, both to honour him and to be employed by him.

[3.] His royal posture, he shall 'sit upon the throne of his glory.' A glorious throne, beseeming the Son of God and the judge of the quick and the dead, shall be erected for him in the clouds, such as none can imagine how glorious it shall be till they see it.

Secondly, The next thing that is offered in these words is the presenting the parties to be judged; and there you may take notice—

1. Of their congregation, and before him shall be gathered all nations.
2. Their segregation, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. In the segregation we have—

[1.] The ordering them into two several ranks and companies, sheep and goats, ver. 32.

[2.] As to posture and place, ver. 33, 'And he shall set his sheep on the right hand and the goats on his left.' Not only a separation as to Christ's knowledge and discerning them, but a separation in place.

I begin with the first branch, the appearance and sitting down of the judge.

Two points I shall observe:—

Doct. 1. That the judge of this world is Jesus Christ.

Doct. 2. That Christ's appearance for the judgment of the world shall be glorious and full of majesty.

For the first point, that Jesus Christ is the world's judge—

1. Here I shall inquire why he is judge.

2. In what nature he doth act or exercise this judgment, whether as God or man, or both.

First, Let us inquire how Christ cometh to be the world's judge, and with what conveniency and agreeableness to reason this honour is put upon him? To a judge there belongeth these four things—(1.) Wisdom; (2.) Justice; (3.) Power; and (4.) Authority.

1. Wisdom and understanding, by which he is able to judge all persons and causes that come before him, according to the rules and laws by which that judgment is to proceed; for no man can give sentence in a cause wherein he hath not skill, both as to matter of right and wrong, and sufficient evidence and knowledge as to matter of fact. Therefore, in ordinary judicatures, a prudent and discerning person is chosen.

2. Justice is required, or a constant and unbiassed will to determine and pass sentence, *ex æquo, et bono*, as right and truth shall require. He that giveth wrong judgment because he doth not accurately understand a thing is imprudent, which in this business is a great fault; but he that doth rightly understand a matter, and yet is biassed by perverse affections and aims, and giveth wrong judgment in the cause brought before him, that is highly impious and flagitious; therefore, the judge must be just and incorrupt.

3. Power is necessary that he may compel the parties judged to stand to his judgment, and the offenders may receive their due punishment; for otherwise all is but precarious and arbitrary, and the judgment given will be but a vain and solemn pageantry.

4. There is required authority; for otherwise, if a man should obtrude himself of his own accord, they may say to him, 'Who made thee a judge over us?' Or if he by mere force should assume this power to himself, the parties impleaded have a pretence of right to decline his tribunal, and appeal from him. Certainly he that rewards must be superior, and much more he that punisheth; for he that punisheth another bringeth some notable evil and damage upon him; but for one to bring evil upon another, unless he hath right to do it, is unjust; therefore good authority is required in him that acts the part of a judge. These things, as they stand upon evident reason, and are necessary in all judicial proceedings between man and man, so much more in this great and solemn transaction of the last judgment; for this will be the greatest court that ever was kept both in respect, of the persons to be judged, which shall be all men and evil angels, high and low, small and great, rich and poor, princes and subjects; and in respect of the causes that shall be produced, the whole business of the world for six thousand years, or thereabouts; or the retributions made, which shall be punishments and rewards of the highest nature and degree, because everlasting. And therefore there must be a judge sought out that is exactly knowing not only of laws, but of all persons and causes: 'That all things should be naked, and open to him with whom we have to do,' Heb. 4:12, 13, and 1 John 3:20. Again, exceeding just, without the least spot and blemish of wrong dealing: Gen. 18:25, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' and Rom. 3:5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous, that taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?' It cannot be that the universal and final judgment of all the world should be committed to him that

hath or can do anything wrongful and amiss. And then, that power is necessary both to summon offenders, and make them appear, and stand to the judgment which he shall award, without any hope of escaping or resisting, will as easily appear; because the offenders are many, and they would fain hide their guilty heads, and shun this tribunal, if it were possible: Rev. 6:16, 'Say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.' But that must not, cannot be: Ps. 90:11, 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger? According to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' Authority is necessary also, or a right to govern and to dispose of the persons judged into their everlasting estate; which being all the world, belongeth only to the universal king, who hath made all things, and preserveth all things, and governeth and disposeth all things for his own glory. Legislation and execution both belong to the same power. Judgment is a part of government. Laws are but shadows if no execution follow. Now, let us particularly see how all this belongeth to Christ.

[1.] For wisdom and understanding. It is in Christ twofold—divine and human; for each nature hath its particular and proper wisdom belonging to it. As God, it is infinite: Ps. 147:15, 'His understanding is infinite.' And so by one infinite view, or by one act of understanding, he knoweth all things that are, have been, or shall be, yea, or may be, by his divine power and all-sufficiency. They are all before his eyes, as if naked and cut down by the chine-bone. We know things successively, as a man readeth a book, line after line, and page after page; but God at one view. Now his human wisdom cannot be equal to this. A finite nature cannot be capable of an infinite understanding, but yet it is such as it doth far exceed the knowledge of all men and all angels. When Christ was upon earth, though the forms of things could not but successively come into his mind or understanding, because of the limited nature of that mind and

understanding, yet then he could know whatever he would, and to whatsoever thing he would apply his mind, he did presently understand it; and in a moment, by the light of the divinity, all things were presented to him; so that he accurately knew the nature of whatever he had a mind to know. And therefore then he was not ignorant of those things that were in the hearts of men, and were done so secretly as they were thought only to be known to God himself. Thus he knew the secret touch of the woman, when the multitude thronged upon him, Luke 8:45, 46. So Mat. 9:3, 4, 'When certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth: Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, Why think ye evil in your hearts?' He discerneth the inward thoughts, and turneth out the inside of the scribes' minds. So Mat. 12:24, 25, Jesus knew their thoughts when they imagined that 'by Beelzebub the prince of the devils he cast out devils.' But most fully, see John 2:24, 25, 'He committed not himself to them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.' It may be they knew not themselves, but he knew what kind of belief it was, such as would not hold out in time of temptation. We cannot infallibly discern professors before they discover themselves; yet all hypocrites are seen and known of him, even long before they show their hypocrisy, not by a conjectural, but a certain knowledge, as being from and by himself, as God. He doth infallibly know what is most secret and hidden in man. Now, if he were endowed with such an admirable understanding even in the days of his flesh, while he grew in wisdom and stature, Luke 2, and his human capacity enlarged by degrees, what shall we think of him in that state in which he is now glorious in heaven? Therefore, to exercise this judgment, he shall bring incomparable knowledge, so far exceeding the manner and measure of all creatures, even as he is man; but his infinite knowledge as God shall chiefly shine forth in this work. Therefore he is a fit judge, able to bring forth the secret things of darkness and

counsels of the heart into open and manifest light, 1 Cor. 4:5, and disprove sinners in their pretences and excuses, and pluck off their disguises from them.

[2.] For justice and righteousness. An incorrupt judge, that neither doth nor can err in judgment, must be our judge. As there is a double knowledge in Christ, so there is a double righteousness; one that belongeth to him as God, the other as man; and both are exact and immutably perfect. His divine nature is holiness itself: 'In him is light, and no darkness at all.' The least shadow of injustice cannot be imagined there. All virtues in God are his being, not superadded qualities. God's holiness may be resembled to a vessel of pure gold, where the substance and lustre is the same; but ours is like a vessel of wood or earth gilded, where the substance and gilding is not the same. Our holiness is a superadded quality. We cannot call a wise man, Wisdom; or a righteous man, Righteousness. We use the concrete of man, but the abstract of God. He is love, he is light, he is holiness itself; which noteth the inseparability of the attribute from God. It is himself; God cannot deny himself: his act is his rule. Take Peter Martyr's similitude: A carpenter chopping a piece of wood by a line or square, may sometimes chop right and sometimes wrong; he cannot carry his hand so evenly; but if we could suppose that a carpenter's hand were his rule, he could not chop amiss. Christ's human nature was so sanctified, that upon earth he could not sin, much more now glorified in heaven. And there will be use of both righteousnesses in the last judgment; but chiefly of the righteousness that belongeth to the divine nature; for all the operations of Christ are theandrical; neither nature ceaseth to work in them. As in all the works of men, the body and the soul do both conspire and concur in that way which is proper to either; only, as in the works of his humiliation his human nature did more appear, so in the works that belong to his exaltation and glorified estate, his divine nature

appeareth most; especially in this solemn action, wherein Christ is to discover himself to the world with the greatest majesty and glory.

[3.] For power. A divine power is plainly necessary, that none may withdraw themselves from this judgment, or resist or hinder the execution of this sentence; for otherwise it would be passed in vain: Titus 2:13, 'Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Christ is then to show himself the great and powerful God. His power is seen in raising the dead, in bringing them together in one place, in opening their consciences, in casting them into hell: Mat. 24:30, 'The Son of man shall come from heaven with power and great glory.'

[4.] For authority. I shall the longer insist on this, because the main hinge of all lieth here, and this doth bring the matter home. That Jesus Christ, and none but Jesus Christ, shall be the world's judge. By the law of nature, the wronged party and the supreme power hath right to require satisfaction for the wrong done. Where no power is publicly constituted, possibly the wronged party hath power to require it; but where things are better constituted, lest the wronged party should indulge his revenge and passion too far, it rests in the supreme power, and those appointed by it, to judge the matter, and to make amends to those that are wronged in their body, goods, or good name. Now, to God both these things concur.

(1.) He is the wronged party, and offended with the sins of men. Not that we can lessen his happiness by anything that we can do; for our good and evil reacheth not unto him; his essential glory is still the same, whether we obey or disobey, please or displease, honour or dishonour him. That which is eternal and immutable neither is lessened nor increased by anything that we can do. He is out of the reach of all the darts that we can cast at him. Hurt us they may, but

reach him they cannot. But sin, it is a wrong to his declarative glory as sovereign lord and lawgiver, as it is a breach of his law. There was hurt done to Bathsheba and Uriah, Ps. 51:4, but the sin and obliquity of the action was against God and his sovereign authority. If the injury done to the creature could be severed from the offence done to God, it were not so great. God is the author of the light of nature, and that order which begetteth a sense of good and evil in our hearts. God is the author of the law given by Moses, and the gospel revealed by his Son. Therefore, whatever things are committed against the law of nature, or the law of Moses, or the gospel, certainly it is a wrong to the justice of God, as being a breach of that order which he hath established: 1 John 3:4, 'He that committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is a transgression of the law,' Laws cannot be despised, but the majesty of the lawgiver is contemned, disparaged, and slighted. Therefore upon this right God might come in as a very proper judge. But, indeed, God doth not punish merely as offended, or as a private man revengeth himself, where there is no power publicly constituted to do him right; but he properly judgeth.

(2.) A supreme and sovereign lord, and governor of the world, to whom it belongeth, for the common good, to see that it be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil, and that no compassion be showed but where the case is compassionable, according to that declaration he hath made of himself to the creatures. To declare this more plainly, we shall see how this right accrueth to God. It may be supposed to accrue to him two ways—either because of the excellency of his being, or because of his benefits which he hath bestowed upon mankind.

(1st.) The excellency of his being. This is according to the light of nature, that those that excel should be above others; as it is clear in man, who is above the brute creatures; he is made to have dominion

over them, because he hath a more excellent nature than they. And when God said, 'Let us make man after our own image,' he presently upon that account gave him dominion over the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea. So God, being infinite, and far above all finite things, hath a power over the creatures, angels or men, who are as nothing to him, and therefore to be governed by him. But chiefly—

(2d.) By virtue of the benefits bestowed by him; for great benefits received from another do necessarily beget a power over him that receiveth them; as parents have a power and authority over their children, who are a means under God to give them life and education; the most barbarous people would acknowledge this. How much greater, then, is the right of God, who hath given us life, and breath, and being, and well-being, and all things! He created us out of nothing; and being created, he preserveth us, and giveth us all the good things which we enjoy. And therefore we are obliged to be subject to him, and to obey his holy laws, and to be accountable to him for the breach of them. Therefore, let us state it thus: As the excellency of his nature giveth him a fitness and a sufficiency for the government of mankind, his creation, preservation, and other benefits give him a full right to make what laws he pleaseth, and to call man to an account whether he hath kept them, yea or no. His right is greater than parents can have over their children; for in natural generation they are but instruments of his providence, acting only the power which God giveth them; and the parents propagate nothing to the children but the body, and those things that belong to the body; called, therefore, 'The fathers of our flesh,' Heb. 12:9. Yea, in framing the body God hath a greater hand than they; for they cannot tell whether the child will be male or female, beautiful or deformed. They know not the number and posture of the bones, and veins, and arteries, and sinews; but God doth not only concur to all

these things, but 'form the spirit of man in him,' Zech. 12:1. And all the care and providence of our parents cometh to nothing, unless the Lord directeth it, and secondeth it with his blessing. Therefore God naturally is the governor and judge of all creatures, visible and invisible; so that, from his empire and jurisdiction they neither can nor ought to exempt themselves. So that to be God and judge of the world is one and the same thing expressed in divers terms.

Well, then, you will ask, Why is Christ the judge of the world, rather than the Father and the Spirit, who made us, and gave the law to us? I answer—

1. That we have gone a good step to prove that it is the peculiar right of God, common to the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; 'for these three are one,' 1 John 5:7. They have one common nature, and the operations that are with the divine essence are common to them all. So that as the creation of all things is equally attributed to all, so also the right of this act of judging the world doth alike agree to all. So that as yet the thing is not explained enough, unless we should grant that it shall be exercised by all, or can prove out of the scriptures that one person of these three is ordained, and by mutual consent chosen out by the rest to exercise it for himself and for the other. Indeed, at the first, when the doctrine of the Trinity was not as yet openly revealed, it was not needful to inquire more diligently after it; but this general truth sufficed, that God is the judge of the world. As when Enoch said, Jude 14, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints;' and as David, Ps. 64:2, 'Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth;' and Ps. 50:6, 'God is judge himself;' and in many other places. It was enough to understand it of one only and true God, without distinction of the persons; but when that mystery was clearly manifested, then the question was necessary, which of the persons should be judge of the world?

2. As there is an order among the persons of the blessed Trinity in the manner of subsisting, so there is also a certain order and economy according to which all their operations are produced and brought forth to the creature; according to which order their power of judging fell partly to the Father, and partly to the Son.

[1.] In the business of redemption. The act of judging, which was to be exercised upon our surety, who was substituted in our room and place, and offered himself not only for our good, in *bonum nostrum*, but *loco et vice nostri*, to bear our punishment, and to procure favour to us; there the act of judging belongeth to the Father, to whom the satisfaction is tendered, 1 John 2:1; the advocate is to plead before the judge. But—

[2.] As to the judgment to be exercised upon us, who either partake of that salvation which was purchased by that surety, or have lost it by our negligence and unbelief; there the Son, or second person, is our judge. In the former, the Son could not be judge, because in a sense he made himself a party for our good, and in our room and place; and the same person cannot be both judge and party too; give and take the satisfaction both; that cannot be. Well, then, in this other judgment the Holy Ghost cannot be conveniently the judge; for in this mystery he hath another part, function, and office prepared; and being the third person in the order of subsisting, the Son was not to be passed over, but it fell to him.

[3.] In the Son there is a double relation or consideration—one as he is God, the other as he is mediator; the one natural and eternal, and shall endure for ever; the other of mediator, which as he took upon himself in time, so in the consummation of time he shall at length lay aside: in this latter respect, as mediator, he is judge by deputation. The primitive sovereign and judge is God; and the king and judge by

derivation is Jesus Christ the mediator, in his manhood, united to the second person in the Godhead; and so the judgment of the world is put upon him. In regard of the creatures, his authority is absolute and supreme, for there can be no appeal from his judgment; but in regard of God, it is deputed. He is ordained; so it is said, John 5:27, 'The Father hath given him authority also to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of man.' He hath the power of life and death, to condemn and to absolve. So Acts 10:42, 'He is ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead;' and Acts 17:31, 'He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.' In all which he acts as the Father's vicegerent; and after he hath judged, 'He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father,' 1 Cor. 15:24. So that the right of Christ as mediator is not that which befallerth him immediately from the right of creation; but is derivative, and subordinate to that kingdom which is essential to him, common to the Father, Son, and Spirit.

[4.] This power which belongeth to Christ as mediator is given to him partly as a recompense of his humiliation; of which I shall speak in the second point. But chiefly—

(1.) Because it belongeth to the fulness of his mediatory office; and therefore, being appointed king by the Father, his last function as a king was to judge the world. The Mediator was not only to pay a price to divine justice, and to separate the redeemed from the world, by his Spirit converting them to God, but also to judge the devil, and all those enemies out of whose hands he had freed the Church. He was to fight against the blind world, and triumph over them; and when the world is ended, to judge them, and cast them into eternal torments.

(2.) His office is not full till this be done. It is a part of his administration as mediator. The last act of conquest is overcoming his enemies, and glorifying and redressing injuries and wrongs of his saints.

Secondly, In what nature he doth act and exercise the judgment, as God, or man, or both.

I answer—In both. Christ is the person, as God-man; yet the judgment is acted visibly by him in the human nature, sitting upon a visible throne, that he may be seen of all, and heard. Therefore Christ is so often designed by this expresion, 'Son of man;' as in the text, and Mat. 16:27, and Acts 17:31, and Mat. 26:64, 'Ye shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with power and great glory;' John 5:27. The Son of man is the visible actor and judge. Because the judgment must be visible, therefore the judge must be such as may be seen with bodily eyes. The Godhead puts forth itself by the human nature, in which all these great works are acted.

Use. You see what need there is to get in with Christ: Rom. 8:1, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ;' 1 John 2:28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' Oh! what a comfort will it be to have our Redeemer in our nature to be our judge! Then we shall see our goel, our kinsman, whom we have heard so much of, whom we have loved, and longed for. But the contemners of his mercy will find the Lamb's face terrible: Rev. 6:16, 'And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.' But believers will find their advocate their judge, to reward those that trust in him, Ps. 2:12. He that hath so often pleaded with God for us, he is to pass sentence

upon us. Would a man be afraid to be judged by his dearest friend, or think his sentence would be terrible? If the devil were our judge, or wicked men, we might be sad; but it is your dear Lord Jesus; therefore let us comfort ourselves with the thoughts of it. David's followers were afraid; but when he came to be crowned at Hebron, then he dignified and rewarded them. Christ's followers are now despised; but when he shall come in his glory, they shall be invited into his kingdom: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.'

SERMON III

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.—
MAT. 25:31.

I COME now to the second point:—

Doct. 2. That Christ's appearance for the judgment of the world shall be glorious and full of majesty.

I shall prove it by opening the circumstances of the text. Three things are offered here:—

1. His personal glory.
2. His royal attendance.
3. His glorious seat and throne.

First, His personal glory. Let us see what it is, and why he will come in such an appearance.

First, What it will be. We cannot fully know till we see it; but certain we are this glory must be exceeding great, if we consider—

1. The dignity of his person. He is God-man; and now that mystery is to be discovered to the utmost; therefore he must needs have such a glory as never creature was capable of, nor can be; but at that day the creatures are capable of great glory; for it is said, Mat. 13:43, 'The righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father.' And if it be thus with the saints, how shall it be with Christ? The saints are but creatures; they are not deified when they are glorified; but he is God-man in one person. The saints are but members of the mystical body, but Christ is the head; and therefore he must needs far excel the glory of all the creatures. Ours is but a derived ray; the body of light is in himself. We read, 2 Thes. 1:10, that 'he will be admired in the saints;' that is, in the glory he puts upon them. All the spectators shall stand admiring at the honour he puts upon them, that are but newly crept out of dust and rottenness. But how much more may he be admired for his own personal glory!

2. The quality of his office. He is the judge of the world, who now cometh to appear upon the throne, to be seen of all; therefore there must be a glory suitable. We read, Acts 25:23, that Agrippa and Bernice came to the judgment-seat, μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, with a great deal of pomp and state. And we see in earthly judicatures, when great malefactors are to be tried, the whole majesty and glory of a nation is brought forth; the judge in gorgeous apparel, accompanied with nobles and gentry and officers, and a great conflux of people, to make it more magnificent and terrible. So here is a conflux of the whole world, angels, devils, men from all corners of the earth; all the men that ever were and ever shall be; and Christ cometh forth in his greatest glory.

3. Consider the greatness of his work, and that will show that his glory must needs be discovered. His work is, on the one side, to gather together, to convince, to judge, and punish creatures opposite and rebellious; and to honour and reward his servants, on the other. There is not such a union and confederation of miracles in any one point and article of faith, so much as there is in this of the general judgment. The mighty power and dominion of God is seen in dissolving the elements, in raising the dead bodies, and giving every dust its own flesh, and bringing them together that they may be arraigned and judged; and then in separating them into their several ranks, in which his omniscency and wisdom is seen, that not one of the reprobate shall lie hid among the elect. In judging them his justice cannot be eluded; he that seeth all things in the light of the Godhead cannot want evidence. Then one of the books that is opened is in the parties' custody; and yet they cannot deface it, or blot it out. And then for execution, the majesty of his person and presence will be enough to confound a wicked man. How will the wolves tremble at the sight of the pure and unspotted Lamb! Rev. 6:16. Oh! it will be a piercing sight to them to see him whom they have despised upon the throne! That Jesus whose word they have scorned, whose ordinances they have neglected or corrupted, whose servants they have molested! When Joseph, who was so great and high in Egypt, discovered himself to his brethren,—'I am Joseph,'—they were abashed and confounded because of the injury they had done him; much more shall sinners be confounded when he shall tell them, 'I am Jesus,' and that he is come on purpose to be revenged on all the abusers and despisers of his grace, and the troublers of his people. How can they then look him in the face? We read, that when they came to attack Christ, John 18:6, as soon as he had told them, 'I am he,' they went backward, and fell to the ground. He would convince his enemies in the midst of his greatest abasement how full of majesty and terror his presence is, if he should let out the glory of it

upon them. If the Lamb's voice be so terrible, how dreadful will he be when he roareth as a lion! And if then, when he was taken and led to be judged, you may guess how glorious his presence will be when he cometh in all his glory to judge others. And by this you may understand the apostle's expression, 2 Thes. 1:9, 'That the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' From there is as much as by; it doth not signify there the kind of the punishment, the *pœna damni*, but the cause. The majesty of Christ is the cause of their torments; and his look and face will be terror enough to sinners. And as he cometh in glory to shame and punish those that despised him, so to comfort and reward his people who have trusted in him, and served him, and suffered for him. He shall come from heaven in state to lead them into those blessed mansions with honour: 1 Peter 4:13, 'Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.' They have seen him in his worst, and now in his best also. The glory of Christ's appearing is sometimes expressed by fire, and sometimes by light. To the saints it is as light, and as a comfortable sunshine; but to the wicked it is a dreadful fire, ἐν πυρὶ φλογὸς: 2 Thes. 2:8, 'And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.'

4. If you consider some foregoing appearances of Christ. As for instance, at the giving of the law, it was the second person that managed that appearance; for it is said, Acts 7:38, that it was 'an angel that appeared in Mount Sinai, and spoke to our fathers;' that is, the angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ; for it is clearly said, Heb. 12:26, that 'the voice of Christ then shook the earth.' Now, what a dreadful appearance was that! The earth shook, the mountain trembled, and out of the midst of the thunderings, and lightnings,

and a thick cloud, was the sound of the trumpet heard, so that the people trembled; yea, Moses himself, a meek man, that had done great service in the church, did exceedingly quake and tremble, Heb. 12:18–21. When he gave the law, he is represented as a terrible judge, ready to overcome his adversaries with the tempest of his wrath; much more when he cometh to execute the sentence of the law; as execution is always more terrible than promulgation. Or you may guess at it by the prophet Isaiah's terror when he saw God in vision, Isa. 6:5. Into what an agony it drove that holy prophet! 'Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.' Adam fled from the presence of God walking in the garden, though God came to him in no terrible appearance, and though he had sinned, yet was not cut off from all hope of reconciliation. How will wicked men abide the presence of Christ when he cometh to show forth his glory, and they are excluded by his final sentence from all hope of pardon? Or you may set it forth by the glory of Christ's transfiguration, the glory that was seen then; for that was a glimpse of this glory of the Father, in which he shall appear at that day: Mat. 17:2, 'And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' And then arose a bright cloud, and a voice out of the bright cloud: 'And when the disciples heard it, they were sore afraid.' There was a glorious shining brightness, breaking through skin and garment, overwhelming the disciples, that they were not able to stand before his majesty, though it were in mercy revealed to them. Or by that appearance of the angel, described Mat. 28:3, 4, 'His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment as white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.' Or by the appearance of Christ to Paul, Acts 9, when he was blind for seven days, when the Lord Jesus showed himself to him from heaven. These instances will give us a guess, a taste of it. But—

Secondly, Why he will come in this great glory? I answer—

1. To take off the scandal and ignominy of the cross, and to recompense him for his humiliation. He that was once despised in the world for his outward and despicable estate will then be glorious, when he shall declare his power in raising the dead by his voice, and all the elements burning about him, and all the saints and angels attending him, every one as bright as the sun; a glorious high throne set in the air for him, and all the creatures presented before him, and bowing to him. Ransacking the consciences of sinners, and bringing forth the story of all his administrations in the world. Then there will be a full recompense for all his sufferings. To make this evident, let us compare the two comings of Christ. Christ's first coming was so obscure, that it was scarce observed and understood by the world. The second will be so conspicuous and glorious as to be seen of all. In the former, he came in the form of a servant, and the contemptible appearance of a mean man; in the second, he cometh as the Lord and heir of all things, clothed with splendour and glory as with a garment. At his first coming he had a forerunner, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness;' in the second he hath a forerunner also; there the Baptist, here an archangel with his trumpet, 1 Thes. 4:10. In his first coming he was accompanied with a few poor fishermen, twelve disciples, persons of mean condition and rank in the world; now with legions of angels, and with his holy ten thousands of his saints, Jude 14. Heretofore he raised three to life; now all the dead. Then he was scorned, buffeted, spit upon; now crowned with glory and honour. In the former he was to act the part of a minister of the circumcision, to preach the gospel to the people of Israel; in the latter he shall act as the judge of all the world. In the former he invited men to repentance, and offered remission of sins to those that received him as a redeemer; but in the latter he shall cut off all hope of pardon for evermore from them that received him not, and

neglected their day of grace. At first he came to bear the sins of many; but now he shall come without sin, Heb. 9:28, not bearing a burden, but bringing a discharge; not as a surety, but as a paymaster; not as a sufferer, but as a conqueror; triumphing over death, and hell, and the devil. He cometh, no more to go from us, but to take us from all misery unto himself. In the former state he was God-man; but he did as it were hide his godhead under the infirmities of his flesh; sometimes it peeped out through the veil in a miracle, but yet mostly obscuring himself; but in the latter he shall discover himself with an unspeakable brightness and majesty, and there will be no need of miracles to prove the divinity of his person and office; for then it shall be a matter of sense; all shall see it, and feel it; some with joy, others with trembling. In the former state he presented himself to suffer death; but then he shall tread death under his feet. In the former he was judged and condemned by men to an ignominious death, the death of the cross; but in the latter he will judge, and with his own mouth pronounce sentence upon all men, on all kings, emperors, and judges, as well as poor peasants, sitting upon a glorious throne and tribunal. Then he judged no man: John 3:17, 'For God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' His work then was to hold out the way of life, or to open the way of salvation to lost man, as a meek saviour and mediator. So John 12:47, 'If any man hear my words, and believe them not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' 'I judge not,' that is, as yet. He laid aside the person of a judge then, and took on him the office of a Saviour, to offer and purchase mercy; that was his proper errand when he came first into the world. So Luke 9:56, 'The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' And to comply with that end, he cast a veil upon his glory, and endured the enmity and contradiction of the world; but now it is otherwise, so that the scandal of his first estate is fully taken off.

2. He appeareth in this great glory to beget a greater reverence and fear in the hearts of all those that shall be judged by him. He telleth them aforehand, that 'the Son of man will come in great glory and majesty;' to daunt and quell the haughty minds and proud conceits of the potentates, oppressors, and great ones of the earth, who often abuse their power to wrong and violence: Eccles. 5:8, 'If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.' Here is swaying and swaggering, and bearing high upon the thought of their title and greatness; but there they and all their greatness and power shall meet with a judge that is able by the breath of his mouth to consume them. What meaneth the insolency of the mighty, the pride of the great heroes of the earth, that swell and grow haughty with their greatness, to look and speak so big? Nothing is so profitable to allay the excesses of power, or to fortify us against the fears of it, as the consideration of this mighty judge, who will review all matters, and cause the great men of the earth to tremble. Power is an unwieldy thing, apt to degenerate, and to put men upon unwarrantable practices; therefore, it needeth to be allayed and balanced with the consideration of a greater power. Alas! all the power and glory of the world is but a fancy, a vain pageantry, compared to Christ's power and glory. What is their authority to his, their splendour to his, their guard to his? Nothing can excuse them; this judgment must and shall pass upon them.

3. For the comfort of his people; for Christ is a pledge and pattern of what shall be done in them; in all things he must first it, Rom. 8:29; and we are made conformable to his image and likeness. All privileges come to us not only from Christ but through Christ: he as mediator is the first possessor. Are we elected? he was elected first: 'My elect servant,' Isa. 42:1. Are we justified? so was he as our surety:

1 Tim. 3:16, 'Justified in the Spirit.' Are we sanctified? first he received the Spirit of holiness. Are we glorified? so was he: Col. 3:4, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory;' 1 John 3:2, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' There will be a manifestation of the sons of God, Rom. 8:19; first the first-born, then all the rest of the brethren. Yea, we participate of his judicial power: the saints shall not only be judged, but the judges, 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. The evil spirits a long time ago had their punishment, but then their solemn doom. The saints shall sit down with him as justices upon the bench. Here the saints judge the world by their doctrine and conversation, there by their vote and suffrage. There is the relation between Christ and the church of wife and husband; *uxor fulget radiis mariti*; as the husband riseth in honour so doth the wife: of head and members, when the head is crowned all the members are clothed with honour. His mystical body shares with him, that there may be a proportion in the body. He is the captain of our salvation, and he will dignify and reward his soldiers, Heb. 2:10. David, when he was crowned at Hebron, his followers were made captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties. Masters and servants: 'My servant shall be where I am.' He will put marks of honour and favour upon all his servants. Here they were disgraced with him, suffered with him, slighted with him; then they shall be glorified with him, for still there is a likeness. We must be contented to lie hid till he be publicly manifested to the world, for we have all our blessings at secondhand. So much for the first thing, his personal glory.

Secondly, His royal attendance, 'And all the holy angels with him.' Chrysostom saith the whole court of heaven removeth with him; surely there are many of them: Jude 14, 'The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment on all, to convince all that are ungodly.' It is likely these angels will put on some visible shape,

for the greater glory and majesty of Christ's appearing; for as he will appear in a body upon his glorious throne, so will his legions round about him; whose order, power, and formidable hosts must some way or other be seen of the wicked for their greater terror. Their attendance upon Christ seemeth to be for these reasons:—

1. Partly for a train, to make his appearance the more full of majesty. We find angels waiting upon Christ at his ascension, and so at his return to judgment. Public ministers of justice are made formidable by their attendance, and Christ will come as a royal king in the midst of his nobles. And—

2. Partly that by their ministry the work of the day may be the more speedily and powerfully despatched. They are to 'gather the elect from the four winds,' Mat. 24:31. The angels that carried their souls to heaven shall be employed in bringing their bodies out of the graves: Luke 16:22, 'Carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.' They are still serviceable about the saints; this is the last office they perform to them; they are as it were, under Christ, guardians of their bones and dust. Now, to the wicked, they are to bind the tares in bundles, Mat. 13:41, that they may be burnt in the fire. They force and present wicked men before the judge, be they never so obstinate. They are witnesses; they attend upon congregations, 1 Cor. 11:10. In assemblies there is more company meets than is visible; devils and angels meet there; the devils to divert your minds as soon as they begin to be serious, to catch the good word out of your heart; and angels observing you; here should be no indecency. So in your ordinary conversations they are conversant about you. And then for execution, no sooner is sentence pronounced but executed; as Haman's face was covered, and he led away to execution as soon as the king had but said the word. Thus the scripture, in a condescension to our capacity, representeth to us the ministry of

angels in that great and terrible day. We can better understand the operations of angels than of God himself; they being nearer to us in being, and of an essence finite and limited, their acts are more comprehensible.

3. There may be a third reason imagined why the angels should come to this judgment, which will give us an occasion for handling a question, Whether they shall be judged, yea or no?

I answer—For the good angels, I think not; for the bad, the scripture is express and plain.

[1.] For the good angels, it is clear, by what hath been said already, that they shall be present at this action, not to be judged, but to bring others to judgment; as officers, not as parties. I suppose this, if men had continued in their innocency and integrity of their creation, such a day of universal judgment had been needless, for then there had been none to be condemned, because none had sinned; the covenant of God would have been enough to have secured their happiness: so the good angels continuing in that state wherein they were created, there is nothing doubtful about them that needeth any judiciary debate and discussion; and being already confirmed in the full fruition of God and happiness as to their whole nature, their estate is not to be put to any trial: whereas good men, though their souls be in heaven, yet their bodies are not admitted there; some part of them as yet lieth under the effects of sin, and their glorification is private, and God's goodness as yet hath not been manifested to them in the eyes of all the world, nor their uprightness sufficiently vindicated; therefore a judgment needeth for them, but not for the angels, who were never as yet censured and traduced in the world, and they in their whole nature and person enjoy most absolute felicity in God's heavenly sanctuary: no such great change will happen to them after

the judgment as happeneth to the saints when their whole persons are taken into glory. It is true they have a charge and ministry about the saints, Heb. 1:14; but of that ministry and charge they give an account daily in the sight of God, to whom they do approve themselves in it; so that there is no cause for further inquisition concerning that thing, there being no necessity of judgment concerning them; I think they shall not be judged.

[2.] For the evil angels, the scripture is express: 1 Cor. 6:3, 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' that is, as evil men, so evil angels. So 2 Peter 2:4, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to the judgment of the great day.' Though they are imprisoned in the pit of hell, yet reserved for further judgments. God's irresistible power and terrible justice overruleth, tormenteth, and restraineth them for the present. These are the chains of darkness; yet there is a more high measure of wrath that shall light upon them at the day of judgment. Where any accession or considerable increase shall be made either to the happiness or punishment of any creature, there that creature shall be judged. Now, there is no such considerable alteration or increase of happiness to good angels as to men; and on the other side, there is a considerable alteration as to wicked angels: Mat. 8:20, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' They know there is a time coming when they shall be tormented more than they are yet. And besides, God's justice was never publicly manifested, and by any solemn act glorified, as to the punishment of the evil angels for their rebellion against him, but was reserved for this time. Besides, as God would now receive into glory the good and holy among men, and therefore would first begin with their head, which is Christ, sending him in power and great glory, so, on the other side, when God would punish the disobedient, he would begin with condemning their head,

who is the devil, and is first cast into hell as a pledge of what should light upon all those that follow him, and are seduced by him. I could say more, but I forbear.

Thirdly, There remaineth one circumstance in the text, and that is, Christ's throne of glory; which, because it is wholly to come, and not elsewhere explained in scripture, we must rest in the general expression. The cloud in which he cometh possibly shall be his throne; or, if you will have it further explained, you may take that of the prophecy of Daniel, chap. 7:9, 10, 'I beheld all the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit; whose raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from him: thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened.' I cannot say this prophecy is intended of the day of judgment; but as they said of the blind man, John 9:9, 'Either it is he, or it is very like him,' so this is it, or very like it. And in the general you see it describeth that which is very glorious. Or you may conceive of it by the description of Solomon's throne: 1 Kings 10:18–20, 'Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold: the throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind; and there were stays on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood behind the stays: and twelve lions stood on the one side, and on the other, upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.' It was high and dreadful, but not worthy to be a footstool to this tribunal.

The Use of all is exhortation. To press you to propound this truth—(1.) To your faith; (2.) To your fear and caution; (3.) To your love; (4.) To your patience; (5.) To your hope. That all these graces may be

the more exercised upon this occasion, that you may believe it, and consider it—

1. Propound it to your faith; be persuaded of it. We are so occupied in present things, that we forget or do not mind the future; and men that are in love with their lusts and errors love to be ignorant of those truths, the knowledge whereof might disquiet them in following those lusts: 2 Peter 3:5, 'This they are willingly ignorant of.' But we had need to call upon you again and again to believe these things, that the Lord Jesus shall come in his glory with his angels. They that are slaves to their lusts strongly desire an eternal enjoyment of the present world, and labour to banish out of their hearts the thoughts of the day of judgment. The sound belief of it is not so much encountered with doubts of the understanding, as the lusts and inclinations of their carnal and perverse hearts. But, beloved, I hope it will not be tedious to you to tell you again and again of these things, and to press you to rest your hearts upon them; to you that have set your hearts to love Christ, and to wait for his coming; to you that know there is no such powerful help to the mortification of your lusts as to consider the day of judgment, no such special encouragement in your difficulties as the comfort, glory, and sweetness, of it. Oh! therefore, press your hearts with this truth: Hath not the mouth of truth averred it? Would Jesus Christ assure us of that which shall never be? He that hath been so punctual on his word in lesser truths, would he deceive us in this main article? Sure it should be no hard thing to persuade you that are assured of his fidelity and love that what he hath spoken will come to pass. If it were not so, he would never have told you so. You will find no less than he hath promised. If we did deceive you with sugared and golden words, it were another matter. Expect not that I should bring arguments from nature to prove it to you: God's word is sufficient. Faith is built upon God's testimony, and nothing else. Though other

arguments have their use, and at other times I have produced them, now I shall forbear: only, because there are godless mockers, who suspect all, and do not so much reason against this article of our christian faith, as scoff at it, and you may meet with some of those, I think it not amiss to answer their cavils. A carnal and devilish wit will find out so many reasons, plausible to themselves and others like themselves; otherwise it were enough to reject them as blasphemies with detestation. But, because they please themselves in their atheistical conceits, you shall see they make rather against them than for them.

[1.] If they should urge that reason in the apostles' days, when blasphemy was not grown so bold and witty: 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 'All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation;' we might answer, as, the apostle did, that it is fit that things should keep one constant course in the day of the Lord's patience and mercy; but 'the day of the Lord will come as a thief.' Shall there never be a change because the preparations are not presently visible? This is a manifest lie. Particular judgments on some wicked men do prove that there shall be a general judgment on all; for seeing some are justly punished, and others deserving no less are spared, he who is immutably good and impartially just must have a day for punishing these afterwards; and God hath fire in store as well as water, to burn up as well as to drown the object of their lusts and pleasure.

[2.] Their great argument is the blemish of providence in their eyes, the seeming neglect of the good, and evil done amongst men. I answer—That will prove it which they bring to disprove it; for the apostle telleth us, 'This is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God,' 2 Thes. 1:5. What! even the calamity of good men? Solomon made another the quite contrary use of it: Eccles. 3:16, 17, 'Moreover, I saw the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place

of righteousness, that iniquity was there: I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time for every purpose and for every work.' The wicked prosper, and destroy the just. You make it an argument for your infidelity; but it is an argument against it. Stay till the assizes come. It followeth not there is no government because the thief and murderer is not hanged as soon as he hath done the fact. God's day will come, and then they go to prison. When you see malefactors drinking, dancing, frolicking in prison, will you say, I see there is no government in this kingdom?

[3.] Many think this is a state-engine to keep the world in better order and government. But I answer—Needeth there a lie to establish so great a benefit to mankind? It cannot be. Doth interest or virtue govern the world? If mere interest, what a confusion would there be of all things? Then men might commit all villany, take away men's lives and goods at pleasure, when it is their interest, when they could do it safely and secretly; then servants might poison their masters, if they could do it without discovery; and we might prey one upon another if it were in the power of our hands, and so live like wild and ravenous beasts; and by this rule, catch he that catch can here would be the best, and vice and impiety would be the greatest wisdom. But if virtue govern the world, it is a clear case virtue cannot be supported without thoughts of the world to come; and can we imagine that God would make a world that cannot be governed but by falsehood and deceit, as you suppose the opinion of judgment to come is?

2. Propound it to your fear and caution. Great ones, that are most powerful and unruly, there is a power above them: Jer. 5:5, 'I went to the great ones, that had altogether broken the yoke.' They should tremble now at this glorious coming, to prevent trembling then, Ps. 2:10–12. It is your wisdom to observe the Son, not to oppress his

truth, interest, and people. Take heed of living in opposition to Christ: he will come in great power and great glory. If you neglect, if you stumble upon the rock you should build upon, and reject your own mercies, perish for want of a little care, you shall see the excellency of Christ, but have no benefit by it; see the happiness of the saints with your eyes, but shall not taste thereof, 2 Kings 7:19; as Haman was forced to be Mordecai's lacquey, and cry before him, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king will honour.'

3. Propound it to your love, that you may long for it. The saints are described to be those 'that love his appearing,' 2 Tim. 4:8. And the apostle biddeth them 'hasten to the coming of the day of the Lord,' 2 Peter 3:12. These will be days of refreshing to the saints. Send forth your wishes after it. 'The Spirit in the bride saith, Come,' Rev. 22:17. Nature saith not, Come, but, Tarry still. If it might go by voices whether Christ should come, yea or no, would carnal men give their voice this way? No; the voice of corrupt nature is, Depart, Job 22:14. They are of the devils' mind, cannot endure to hear of it, Mat. 8:24. If malefactors were to choose whether there should be assizes, yea or no, there would never be none. But you, my beloved, should desire to see him whom you have heard so much of. When Christ took his leave of us, his heart was upon meeting and fellowship again, John 14:2. So should we be affected towards his appearing.

4. Propound it to your patience, fortitude, and self-denial. Have no cause to think shame of Christ's service, though you suffer disgrace for it; he will appear worthy of all the respect you show to his person and ways. He is disgraced indeed that is refused by Christ when he cometh in great glory. The judgment of the blind world is not to be regarded. The Lord will show who are his condemned in the world on purpose to try you, though now you are accounted the scurf and offscouring of all things. I know it is a great temptation to persons of

honour and quality; but Christ suffered greater indignities: therefore let us resolve to be more vile for the Lord. Chiefly consider the glory reserved for us in the life to come, 1 John 3:2. Then is the day of the manifestation of the sons of God. Christ is contented for a while to lie hid, and will not show himself in his full glory till the end of the world. In the days of his flesh his person was trampled upon by wicked men; and now he is in heaven, he is despised in his cause and servants: his person is above abuse and contempt, but not his members. Christ came in disguise to try the world. Satan would not have had the boldness to encounter him, the Jews to reject him, carnal christians to neglect him, nor the faith of the elect found to such praise and honour, if all were honourable, glorious, and safe here in the world. But the day of manifestation is hereafter. Let us be patient therefore, and bear all the harsh usage we meet with. There will be honour: 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall meet with him in glory.'

5. Propound it to your hope, and stand ready to meet with him and wait for him; and comfort yourselves with the hopeful expectation, This will be when all things are ready. And you should look every day and long every day for his appearing. I have a Saviour in heaven, that will come again, with all his saints with him: 'Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

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SERMON IV

And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.—MAT. 25:32, 33.

WE now come to the second general, the presenting the parties to be judged; and there we have—

1. The congregation, and all nations shall be gathered before him.
2. A segregation.

[1.] As to company, he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

[2.] As to place and posture, and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left.

First, The congregation. All the dead shall rise, and being risen, shall be gathered together into one place or great rendezvous. According to the analogy of faith we may gather this point:—

Doct. That in the general judgment, all that have lived from the beginning of the world unto that day shall without exception, from the least to the greatest, appear before the tribunal of Christ.

This point will be best illustrated and set forth to you by considering the several distinctions of mankind.

1. The most obvious distinction of mankind is of grown persons and infants; and if all these are presented to the judgment, it will go far in the decision of the point that we have in hand. Grown persons are those whose life is continued to that age wherein they come to the full use of reason; infants are those that die before they are in an ordinary way capable of the doctrine of life. Now for grown persons, the scripture is written purposely for them, and showeth that they shall be judged according to the dispensation they are under; as to infants or lesser children, the case is more difficult and obscure. It is likely that all shall rise in the stature and condition of grown persons,

that is to say, in such a state of body and mind as they may see and hear and understand the judge. When they were born, they were born with a rational soul, which though according to ordinary course lieth idle for a while, and doth not discover itself in any human and rational actions till the organs be fitted and matured, yet that it should be still buried in the body, and perpetually sleep, as being hindered by its organs or instruments of operation, reason will not permit us to conceive, because it is contrary to its natural aptness and disposition, as also the end of its creation. We cannot conceive that God should form the spirit in man, which is immortal, in a body in vain and to no purpose; therefore children shall rise again: we know God hath made a difference between infants. The scripture seemeth to extend the merit of Christ's death to his church, Eph. 5:26, 27; and that infants of believers are born members of the church is out of question. To be sure, the covenant taketh in our children together with us: Gen. 22:7, 'I am thy God, and the God of thy seed.' And those that never lived to disinherit themselves of that blessing, we have no reason to trouble ourselves about them: God is their God, and knoweth how to instate them in the privileges of the covenant. Look, as we judge of the slip according to the stock upon which it groweth, till it live to bring forth fruit of its own, so we judge of children according to the parents' covenant, till they come to years of discretion to choose their own way, and declare what have been God's counsels concerning them. The parents' sprinkling the blood on the door-posts saved the whole family. It is very reasonable therefore to think that infants, born in the church, dying infants, obtain remission of original sin by Christ, whatever become of others; for what reason have we to judge them that are without? 1 Cor. 5:12. And if God vouchsafe some the remission of that sin which they have, out of his mercy and grace in Christ, they must in the resurrection be in that state, that they may enjoy eternal felicity. The sum of the whole matter is, that in this great congregation children

shall appear as well as parents. But children, dying children, are reckoned to their parents as a part of them, or as an appendage and accession to them, whose condition is likely to be the same with theirs as to glorification and acceptance to life. And with the condition of others we meddle not, but leave them to God. The scripture is sparing of speaking of them to whom it speaketh not. God speaketh more fully to grown persons, as those with whom he dealeth and treateth in the gospel. He is not bound to give us an account how he will proceed with others; yet for godly parents' comfort, he hath more fully revealed his mind concerning their children than the children of infidels or wicked and open enemies to his truth. What he may do to them as to their original sin we cannot easily pronounce, as to their condemnation or absolution. Many allege, indeed, that they have an evil heart, and a nature that they would despise the gospel, if they had lived to receive the offer of it. I answer—It is true they are by nature children of wrath, as all are, Eph. 2:3; and the gospel telleth us who are the serpentine brood of a transgressing stock; but how far God may show grace to them we know not. But for what they would do afterwards, that can make no argument in this case; for God being a most just and most equal judge, doth not judge his creature for what is possible and future, but only for things that are past and actually committed. He punisheth nothing but sins; but things that are not, cannot be sins. We crush serpents for their venomous nature before they have actually done us any harm; so may God destroy children; but that he doth not always do it, plain experience manifesteth.

2. The next distinction is of those whom Christ shall find dead or alive at his coming. Those that are dead shall be raised out of their graves, and have the spirit of life restored to them, that they may come to judgment. Those that are alive shall undergo a change like death: 1 Cor. 15:51, 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be

changed.' These bodies, as thus qualified, cannot brook the state of the other world. Now, there will be found both good and bad alive at Christ's coming. If all the faithful were dead before, there would be some time when God would have no church upon earth. Now, it is foretold in the scriptures that the kingdom of Christ, which consists in the church, shall endure for ever, and that of his government there shall be no end; as no intermission, so no interruption. That therefore it may not be interrupted, some believers there must be, even in the very last times, by whom the kingdom of Christ may be continued in this world, and come to join with the other part of Christ's kingdom that is in the other world. Therefore the apostle telleth us, 1 Thes. 4:16, 17, 'The dead in Christ shall rise first, and then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and meet the Lord in the air; and so for ever be with the Lord.' On the other side, all the wicked shall not die; for the man of sin is to be consumed with the brightness of his coming. Now, how shall the brightness of his coming consume him if he were already abolished, with all his adherents and followers?

3. The third distinction is of good and bad. Both sorts shall come to receive their sentence; only the one come to the judgment of condemnation, the other to the judgment of absolution: John 5:28, 29, 'They which are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.' The word is clear in this point, that both the godly and wicked shall live again, that they may receive a full recompense according to their ways. None of the godly will be lost, but shall all meet in that general assembly; nor shall any of the wicked shift or shun this day of appearance, but both shall at the call of Christ be brought before his judgment-seat; the godly rejoicing to meet their Redeemer, and the wicked forced into the presence of their judge, who could otherwise

wish that hills and mountains might cover them. So Acts 24:15, 'I believe the resurrection of the just and unjust;' not *œquabiliter boni*; for Mat. 5:45, 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain upon the just and unjust.' Let us answer some places for the good: John 3:18, 'He that believeth in him, οὐ κρίνεται, is not judged;' that is, with the judgment of condemnation; so we render it; and εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται: John 5:24, 'He that believeth on him shall not come into condemnation.' Yet for absolution they come. On the other side, some of the ancients denied the wicked's entering into judgment: Ps. 1:5, 'The ungodly shall not stand in judgment' (the latter clause expounds it), 'nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' This is the great bridle upon the wicked when they are serious; they fear more the resurrection from the dead than death itself.

4. The next distinction of men whom Christ shall judge are believers and unbelievers. To believers we reckon all those that lived not only in the clear sunshine of the gospel, but those also to whom the object of faith was but more obscurely propounded; to those that lived before the flood and after the flood, as well as those that lived in Christ's time, and after the pouring out of the Spirit. Abel and Enoch and Noah are mentioned in the chronicle and history of faith, Heb 11, as well as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and believers of a later stamp and edition. And among unbelievers are reckoned all those that through their own obstinate incredulity rejected the divine revelation made to them, as well those that neglected the great salvation spoken by the Lord himself, as the world of ungodly in Noah's time, 1 Peter 3:20, who were disobedient when Noah preached righteousness to them, or laid open the way of life and salvation to them. Indeed, it concerneth most those that have the gospel clearly preached to them, but others are not excused. In short, this distinction will bring in several ranks of men.

[1.] Some that have heard of Christ, and of the grace of God dispensed by him. These shall be judged by the gospel tenor and dispensation, which clearly sets forth all men to be sinners, and therefore to have deserved eternal death; and that 'there is no name under heaven whereby men can be saved, but by the name of Jesus,' Acts 4:12. And the great question propounded to them is, whether they have believed in Christ, yea or no? Mark 16:16, 'They that believe not shall be damned.' They are condemned upon a double account—partly by the law, and partly by the gospel. Partly by the law, because they, being under the wrath and curse of God, would not embrace the remedy. Besides, the sentence of the law standeth in full force against a man if he cometh not to Christ to get it repealed: John 3:18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already;' and the sentence is ratified in the gospel: John 3:36, 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' To their other sins they added unbelief, which is a heinous crime; yea, the great damning sin, 1 John 5:10. Those that say they believe are to prove the truth of their faith by the power it hath upon their hearts and practice, James 2:6–8, Rev. 20:21; if that hath drawn off their hearts from worldly vanities and fleshly lusts, and engaged them to live unto God in the new and heavenly life.

[2.] All that have heard of Christ have not the gospel alike clearly made known unto them. To some he is preached clearly and purely, and without any mixture of errors that have any considerable influence upon the main of religion. Others are in that communion in which those doctrines are as yet taught that are indeed necessary to salvation, but many things are added which are indeed pernicious and dangerous in their own nature; so that if a man should possibly be saved in that profession, 'he is saved as by fire,' 1 Cor. 3:13. And it is a strange escape; as if one had poison mingled among his meat, the goodness of his digestion and strength of nature might work it out,

but the man runneth a great hazard. As the Papists acknowledge Christ for the redeemer and mediator between God and men; they own his two natures and satisfaction, though they mingle doctrines that strangely weaken these foundations. The Turks deny not Christ to be a great prophet, but they deny him to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and the Redeemer of mankind, and wickedly prefer their false prophet before him. The Jews confess there was a Jesus the son of Mary, that gave out himself in their country of Judea to be the Messiah, and gathered disciples, who from him are called christians; but they call him an impostor, question all the miracles done by him, as done by the power of the devil. Now, all these shall be judged by the gospel, which is so proudly and obstinately rejected by them: 'The Spirit shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me,' John 16:9. He hath so proved himself to be the Christ, the Son of God, the great prophet, and true Messiah, that their rejecting and not believing in him and his testimony will be found to be a great and damning sin, both in itself and as it bindeth their other sins upon them; however, their judgment shall be lighter or heavier, according to the diversity of their offence, and the invincible prejudices they lie under. The corrupters of the christian religion, because they have perverted the truth of the gospel to serve their interests (ambition, avarice, or any human passion), their doom will be exceeding great: 2 Thes. 2:10–12, 'And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.' To poison fountains was the highest way of murder; to royle the waters of the sanctuary, to mangle Christ's ordinances, is a crime of a high nature. The Jews that rejected Christ in so clear light of miracles, John 8:24, Christ saith, 'If you believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;' it maketh

the judgment the more heavy upon them. Others to whom Christ is less perspicuously revealed shall have a more tolerable judgment; for the clearer the revelation of the truth is, the more culpable is the rejection or contempt of it. For there is no man that heareth of Christ's coming into the world, suffering for sinners, and rising again from the dead, and ascending into heaven, but is bound more diligently to inquire into it, and to receive and embrace this truth. Carnal christians, their profession condemneth them; they are inexcusable; they deny in works what in word they seem to acknowledge.

[3.] Some lived under the legal administration of the covenant of grace, to whom two things are propounded:—(1.) The duty of the law; (2.) Some strictures and obscure beginnings of the gospel. They shall be judged according to that administration they are under; either for violating the law, or neglecting the gospel, or those first dawnings of grace which God offered to their view and study. Indeed the law was more manifest, but the gospel was not so obscure but they might have understood it. Therefore God will call them to an account about keeping his law, by which who can be justified? Or whether by true repentance they have fled to the mercy of God, which by divers ways was then revealed to them, and have owned the Messiah in his types? Ps. 143:2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified;' Ps. 130:3, 4, 'If thou shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Which, if not clear, they shall be condemned not only for not keeping the law, but also for neglect of grace. Though their unbelief and impenitency be not so odious as theirs is that lived under a clearer revelation, yet a grievous sin it was, which will bring judgment upon them.

[4.] There are some that have no other discovery of God but what they could make from the courses of nature and some instincts of conscience, as mere pagans. The apostle having told us of the righteous judgment of God, Rom. 2:5, and how managed, ver. 6–8, and how aggravated, the Jew first, and then the Gentile; he then concludeth, ver. 12, 'For as many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law; but as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law;' that is, the Jews, as the other is to be understood of the Gentiles, to whose notice no fame of Christ or the law of Moses could possibly come. To perish without the law is to be punished, and punishment followeth upon condemnation, and condemnation is in this judgment. Therefore pagans and heathens, that lived most remote from the tidings of the gospel and divine revelation, must appear before Christ's tribunal to be judged. But by what rule? He telleth us, ver. 14, 15, 'For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; these having not a law, are a law to themselves: which show the work of the law written upon their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another.' They knew themselves to have sinned by that rule, by the natural knowledge of God, and some sense of their duty impressed upon their hearts; nature itself told them what was well or ill done; the law of nature taught them their duty, and had some affinity with the law of Moses; and the course of God's providence taught that God was placable, which hath some affinity with these gospel rudiments and first strictures. Therefore the goodness and long-suffering of God should lead them to repentance, Rom. 2:4. Surely, then, the impenitency of the Jews will meet with a heavy condemnation, according to the proportion of clearness in their revelation.

[5.] Men of all conditions, high and low, rich and poor, mighty and powerful, or weak and oppressed, kings, subjects: Rev. 20:12, 'I saw

the dead, both small and great, stand before God.' No rank or degree in the world can exempt us. These distinctions do not outlive time; they cease at the grave's mouth; there all stand upon the same level, and are of the same mould. To bridle the excesses of power, the scripture often telleth us of the day of judgment, how the great men of the earth shall tremble, and the hearts of the powerful then be appalled, Rev. 6:15–17. They shall then understand the distance between God and the creature, when his wrath and terror is in its perfection. Who can stand when he is angry? Ps. 76:7. It is a wonder men will live in a way of controversy with him, and are so little moved at it. No wrath so considerable as the wrath of the Lamb. When their mediator is their enemy, none in heaven or earth can befriend them. Those that, in the thoughts of men, are most secure, ringleaders to others in sin, that swear and swagger, and bear down all before them, and persist in their opposition to Christ with the greatest confidence, will be found the greatest and most desperate cowards then. Now these gallants ruffle it as if they would bid defiance to Christ and his ways. Oh! how pusillanimous and fearful then! Appear they must, though they cannot abide it. What torture do they endure between these two, the necessity of appearing, and the impossibility of enduring! Oh! the great ones then would gladly change power with the meanest saint. Then they know what an excellent thing it is to have the favour of God, and of what worth and value godliness is, and how much a good conscience exceedeth all the glory of the world, and what an advantage it is to have peace made with God.

[6.] Not only some of all sorts, or of all nations, but every individual person. In one place the apostle saith, 'All of us,' collectivè, 2 Cor. 5:10; in another place, distributivè, 'Every one of us,' Rom. 14:12; not only all, but every one; not all, shuffled together in gross, but every

one, severally and apart, is to give an account of his ways and actions to God.

Use. If these things be so, that all places shall give up their dead, and all those nations that differ so much one from another in tongues, rites, and customs of living, and distance of habitation, shall be gathered together into one place, and not left scattered up and down the world;—there are many ways to shift men's courts and tribunals (they may fly the country, or bribe the judge), but there is no shunning the bar of Christ;—oh! then, let the thought of this make us more watchful and serious.

1. In this judgment there is no exemption; for all are summoned, small and great; and whether they will or no, they shall be gathered together. The faithful shall willingly come, as to absolution; the wicked shall be violently haled, as to condemnation.

2. There is no appearing by a proetor or attorney; but every one in his own person must give an account of himself to God.

3. No denying; for the books shall be opened, Rev. 20:12.

4. No excusing or extenuating; for Christ will 'judge the world in righteousness,' Acts 17:31, according to terms of strict justice.

5. No appealing; for this is the last judgment. No suing out of pardon, or no time of showing favour; for this is too late; the day of grace is past; sinners are in termino; their work is over, and now come to receive their wages. Oh! then, now let us take care that this day may be comfortable to us. God's children have more cause to look and long for it than to dread it.

Secondly, We now come to the segregation; and there—

First, as to company, 'He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divideth between the sheep and the goats.' In these words there is—

1. A point intimated and implied, that Christ is represented as a shepherd and the godly as sheep, but the wicked as goats.
2. There is a second point expressed, that though there be a confusion of the godly and wicked now, yet at the day of judgment there will be a perfect separation.

For the first of these, that Christ is represented to us under the notion of a shepherd, so he is, called, Zech. 13:7, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd: I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered;' and 1 Peter 2:25, 'But are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.'

1. A shepherd among men is one that is not lord of the flock, but a servant to take care of them and charge of them. This holdeth good of Christ as mediator; for he is God's elect servant, the servant of his decrees: the flock are his, not in point of dominion, right, and original interest, but in point of trust and charge. So Christ is lord of the faithful as God; but as mediator he hath an office and service about them, and is to give an account of them to God, when he bringeth them home, and leadeth them into their everlasting fold, John 6:37–40, with 1 Cor. 15:24, 25; Heb. 2:13, 'Behold I and the children which God hath given me;' Jude 24, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory;' and Col. 1:22, 'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight.'

2. The work of the shepherd is to keep the flock from straying, to choose fit pasture and good lair for them; yea, not only to fodder the

sheep, but to drive away the wolf. To defend the flock is a part of his office; as David fought with the lion and the bear, and slew them for the flock's sake. All these concur in Christ, as you may see, Ps. 23:1–4, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' There is guarding, and feeding, and defending. So John 10, there is leading, ver. 3, 4; then there is feeding them, ver. 9; and defending them, ver. 12, 27–29.

3. Christ is not an ordinary shepherd: he is ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός 'The good shepherd,' John 10:11; and Heb. 13:20, ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν, 'The great shepherd of the sheep;' and 1 Peter 5:4, ἀρχιποίμενος, 'The chief shepherd;' 'When the chief shepherd shall appear,' &c.

[1.] He is the good shepherd. Other shepherds are said to be good when they perform their office well, or quit themselves faithfully in the discharge of their trust. But besides the resemblance in these qualities, there are certain singularities in Christ's office that denominate him the good shepherd.

(1.) A good shepherd is known by his care and vigilance; if he know the state of his flock, Prov. 27:23. This resemblance holdeth good in Christ: he hath a particular care and inspection of every soul that belongeth to his flock: 'Calleth his sheep by name,' John 10:3. He hath a particular exact knowledge of every one of them, their persons, their state, their condition, their place, their country, their conflicts, temptations, and diseases: 2 Tim. 2:19, 'The Lord knoweth who are his;' John 13:18, 'I know whom I have chosen.' Though there be so many thousands of them scattered up and down in the world, yet he is acquainted with every individual person, every single believer, and all their necessities; John, James, Thomas. As the high

priest carried the names of the tribes upon his bosom, so hath Christ the names of every one that belongeth to God's flock engraven upon his heart, though they may be despicable in the world, mean servants, employed in the lower offices of the family: Ps. 34:6, 'This poor man cried unto the Lord.' Poor soul! he lieth under such temptations, encumbered with such troubles, employed in such a hard task and service: My Father gave me a charge of him; I must look to him. Luke 15 we read, that when one was missing, he left all to look after the stray lamb. His knowledge is infinite.

(2.) The goodness of a shepherd lieth in his pity and wisdom to deal tenderly with the flock as their state doth require; so is Christ a good shepherd by reason of his tender respect and gentle conduct: Isa. 40:11, 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom; and shall gently lead those that are with young.' He guideth his people with dispensations suitable to them. In his lifetime he taught them, καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκούειν, 'He spake the word unto them as they were able to hear it,' Mark 4:33; as Jacob drove as the little ones and cattle were able to bear, Gen. 33:14. He calleth to work and suffering according as he giveth grace and strength, 1 Cor. 10:13. Proportioneth their temptations according to their growth and experience. He sendeth great trials after large assurances, Heb. 10:32. As castles are victualled before they are suffered to be besieged. There is a sweet condescension in all his dispensations to every one's state and condition.

(3.) The goodness of a shepherd lieth in a constant performing all parts of a shepherd to them: Ezek. 34:15, 16, 'I will seek that which was lost, bring back that which was driven away, bind up that which was broken, strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them with judgment.' There is all necessary

attendance and accommodation conducing to the safety and welfare of the flock; to protect them from violence from without, to prevent diseases within, to keep them from straying by the inspirations of his Spirit and the fence of his providence ('Blessed be God, that sent thee to meet me this day,' saith holy David), and to reclaim and reduce them when strayed. It were endless to instance in all.

(4.) There is this particularity in this good shepherd, of which there is no resemblance found in others: John 10:11, 'I am the good shepherd, that giveth my life for the sheep.' He doth not only give life to them, but his own life for them, by way of ransom. This is a flock purchased by the blood of God, Acts 20:28. He came from heaven to find out lost sheep; left a palace for the wilderness, and the throne for the fold. David was called from the sheep-hook to the sceptre; but Christ from the sceptre to the sheep-hook. Lost man had never been found if Christ had not come from heaven to seek him. We were forfeited, and therefore to be ransomed; and no price would serve but Christ's own blood.

(5.) There is this peculiar in this good shepherd, that he maketh us become the flock of his pasture, and sheep of his fold, Ps. 100:3. When other shepherds have the sheep delivered into their hands, he searcheth up and down for them in the woods and deserts; wherever they are scattered abroad, a lamb here and a lamb there; free grace findeth them out: Ezek. 34:4, 'I will search out my sheep, and seek them out;' Zeph. 3:10, 'I will look after my dispersed from beyond the river of Ethiopia.' In the farthest and unknown countries in every land, Christ knoweth where his work lieth, though it may be but one in a village, in the midst of wolves and swine. He maketh them to be what they are not by nature; turneth and changeth swine into sheep and wolves into lambs.

[2.] He is the great shepherd. (1.) Great in his person, the Son of God. Dominus exercituum fit pastor ovium, saith Bernard—the Lord of hosts is become the shepherd of the flock. He needed us not; if he had delighted in multitudes of flocks and herds, there are ten thousand times ten thousand angels that stand about the throne. He needed not leave his throne and die for angels as for us. And (2.) He is great in regard of the excellency of his gifts and qualifications: he is king, priest, and prophet. In the pastoral relation he manifesteth all his offices; he feedeth them as a prophet, dieth for them as a priest, defendeth them as a king; never sheep had better shepherd. Redimit preciose, pascit caute, ducit solícite, collegit secure. Jacob was very careful, yet some of his flock were lost, or torn, or stolen, or driven away; but it cannot be so with Christ's flock; we are safe as long as he is upon the throne. (3.) Great in regard of his flock: he is the shepherd of souls; millions of them are committed to his charge, and one soul is more worth than all the world.

[3.] He is the chief shepherd. Though he doth employ the ministry of men to feed his flock under him, yet doth he keep the place and state of arch-shepherd and prince of pastors, as the chief ruler and feeder of his flock, from whom all the under-shepherds have their charge and commission, Mat. 28:19, 20, their furniture and gifts, Eph. 4:8, 11; upon whose concurrence dependeth the efficacy and blessing of the ordinances dispensed by them, 1 Cor. 3:6, 7; and to him they give an account, Heb. 13:17, as he doth to God. Now this is a great comfort, that Christ taketh the prime charge of the flock. Some thrust in themselves, but he will require his flock at their hands.

Use. Let all this encourage you to look for your supplies by Christ. He professeth by special office to take charge of you; and you may be confident of his care and fidelity. Besides his love to the flock, he is bound as God's shepherd. By distrust you carry it so as if Christ were

unfaithful in his charge and office. When you come to the ordinances, you do directly cast yourselves upon Christ's pastoral care to feed you to everlasting life; and he will give you strength and refreshing. Only be not lean in Christ's pasture, nor faint, as Hagar, near a fountain.

Secondly, The godly are as sheep.

1. Sheep are animalia gregalia, such kind of creatures as naturally gather themselves together and unite themselves in a flock. Other creatures we know, especially beasts of prey, live singly and apart; but sheep are never well but when they come together and live in a flock. Such are christians, and such as are partakers of a heavenly calling. It is unnatural for them to live alone: they feed in flocks, Heb. 10:25. Man by nature is ζῷον πολιτικὸν; he hath a nature that is apt to make him gather into a community and society. We are social, not only upon interest, as weak without others, but upon natural inclination. We have a desire to dwell and live together, Eccles. 4:10. The voice of nature saith, it is not good to be alone; so it is true of the new nature; there is a spirit of communion that inclineth them to some other, and to join with them.

2. Sheep, they are innocent and harmless creatures. They that belong to Christ are not bears and tigers and wolves, but sheep, that often receive harm, but do none. Christ was holy and harmless, Heb. 7:26, and so are they.

3. Sheep are obedient to the shepherd. The meek and obedient followers of Christ are like sheep in this, who are docile and sequacious: John 10:4, 'He goeth before them, and they know his voice;' and ver. 16, 'Other sheep must I bring in also, and they shall hear my voice;' and ver. 27, 'My sheep hear my voice; I know them,

and they follow me.' All Christ's comforts, in all places and all ages, have the same properties and the same impression.

4. They are poor dependent creatures. They are ever attendant on the shepherd, or the shepherd on them.

[1.] Because of their erring property. They are creatures pliant to stray; but being strayed, do not easily return. Swine will run about all day and find their way home at night. Domine, errare per me potui, redire non potuissem, saith Austin. Christ bringeth home the stray lamb upon his own shoulders, Luke 15.; and Ps. 119:176, 'All we like sheep have gone astray.' If God leave us to ourselves, we still shall do so.

[2.] Because of their weakness. They are weak and shiftless creatures, unable to make resistance. Other creatures are armed with policy, skill, or courage to safeguard themselves; but sheep are able to do little for themselves; they are wholly kept in dependence upon their shepherd for protection and provision. All their happiness lieth in the good wisdom, care, and power of the shepherd. Wolves, lions, and leopards need none to watch over them. Briars and thorns grow alone; but the noble vine is a tender thing, and must be supported, pruned, and dressed. The higher the being the more necessitous, and the more kept in dependence. There needs more care to preserve a plant than a stone; a stone can easily aggregate and gather moss to itself. There needeth more supplies for a beast than a plant, and more supplies to a man than to a beast.

Thirdly, The wicked are as goats. They are as goats both for their unruliness and uncleanness. Unruliness: they have not the meekness of sheep, are ready to break through all fence and restraint; so a wicked man is yokeless. They are also wanton and loathsome; it is a

baser sort of animal than the sheep; therefore chosen to set forth a wicked and ungodly man.

The second point expressed is this, that though now there is a confusion of godly and wicked, as of goats and sheep in the same field, yet then there shall be a perfect separation.

There will not then be one of one sort in company with the other: Ps. 50:5, 'He will gather his saints together;' and Ezek. 34:17, 'I will judge between cattle and cattle, the sheep and the goats;' Ps. 1:5, 'The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' When the saints meet in a general assembly, not one bad shall be found among them. Though now they live together in the same kingdom, in the same village, in the same visible church, in the same family, yet then a perfect separation.

The reasons are briefly these two—(1.) The judge's wisdom and perspicuity; (2.) His justice. They that will not endure them now shall not then abide with them in the same fellowship.

Use 1. Here is comfort to them that mourn under the degenerate and corrupted state of Christianity. The good and the bad are mixed together; many times they live in the same herd and flock. It is a trouble to the godly that all are not as they are; and we feel the inconveniency, for the carnal seed will malign the spiritual, Gal. 4:29. But God will distinguish between cattle and cattle. Discipline indeed is required in the church to keep the sound from being infected, and the neglect of it is matter of grief. But the work is never perfectly done till then; then there is a perfect separation, and a perpetual separation, never to mix more.

Use 2. This may serve to alarm hypocrites. Many hide the matter from the world and themselves, but Christ shall perfectly discover

them, and bring them to light, and show themselves to themselves and all the world. All their shifts will not serve the turn. Here are mixed together the sheep and the goats, the chaff and the solid grain, tares and wheat, thorns and roses, vessels of honour and dishonour. Many do halt between God and Baal. A man cannot say, They are sheep or goats; neither do they themselves know it. Therefore it calleth upon us to make our estate more explicit. Yea, many that seemed sheep shall be found goats. Then it wilt appear whether they are regenerated to the image of Christ, or destitute of the spirit of sanctification, yea or no; whether they loved God above all, or continued serving the flesh, making it their end and scope.

Use 3. Are we sheep or goats? There is no neutral or middle estate. Is there a sensible distinction between us and others? Then we shall have the fruit and comfort of it at that day: 1 Peter 2:25, 'Ye were as sheep going astray; but now are returned to the bishop and shepherd of your souls.' We all should look back upon our former courses, betaking ourselves to Jesus Christ, seeking to enjoy his favour and fellowship, submitting to him as our ruler and guide, resigning up ourselves to be at his disposal, both for condition of life and choice of way and course. I say, when by his powerful grace we are thus brought back from our sinful way and course, and made to follow him as our Lord, we are his flock, and he will mind us. Time was when you did run wild, according to your former fancies and the bent of your unruly hearts, and were wholly strangers to God, and could spend days, nights, and weeks, and months, and yet never mind communion with him; but now the business of your souls is to give up yourselves to him, or take the way which he hath prescribed to everlasting glory. Resolve no longer to live to yourselves, but to be under his discipline.

Secondly, As to place, 'He shall set the sheep upon the right hand, and the goats upon the left.

In the right hand there is greater strength and ability, and fitness for all kind of operations; therefore that place is counted more honourable. So Christ himself is said to 'sit down at the right hand of God the Father;' that is to say, hath obtained the highest place of dignity and power, above all angels and men, in bliss, honour, and dominion.

Doct. The godly shall be placed honourably at the day of judgment, when the wicked shall have the place of least respect.

A type and figure of this we have in Moses his division of the tribes. Some were to stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, some on Mount Ebal to curse; those born of Jacob's wives put upon Mount Gerizim, those of his servants on Mount Ebal, Reuben excepted, who went into his father's bed. The saints, in their measure, enjoy all the privileges that Christ doth. Now the Father saith to the Son, Ps. 110:1, 'Sit thou at my right hand.' So they have chosen the best blessings. It is said, Ps. 16:11, 'At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore;' and Prov. 3:16, 'Length of days is in her right hand.' They love God, and are beloved of him; they honour God in the world: 1 Sam. 2:30, 'They that honour me I will honour.'

Use. Let us then encourage ourselves when we are counted the scurf and offscouring of all things. We shall not always be in this condition, but Christ will put honour upon us in sight of all the world.

SERMON V

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.—MAT. 25:34.

WE have considered in the former verses—(1.) The sitting down of the judge; (2.) The presenting the parties to be judged. Now (3.) The sentence.

First, Of absolution, in these blessed words which I have now read to you. Observe in them—(1.) The preface; (2.) The sentence itself.

1. The preface showeth the person by whom the sentence is pronounced, then shall the King say.
2. The parties whom it concerneth, to them on the right hand.

Secondly, The form and tenor of the sentence itself; it is very comfortable, and ravishing. Take notice—

1. Of a compellation used, ye blessed of my Father.
2. An invitation, expressed in two words, δεῦτε, κληρονομήσατε, come and inherit.

The first giveth warning for entering; the second, for possessing of this blessed estate, and that by a sure tenure.

3. The happiness unto which we are invited; and there the notion by which it is expressed, the kingdom. The adjunct, a kingdom prepared. The application of it to the parties concerned, for you. The

ancientness of it, from the foundation of the world. An estate excellent in itself, and made sure for us.

Doct. That Jesus Christ, at his coming, will adjudge his people unto a state of everlasting happiness, by a favourable and comfortable sentence passed in their behalf.

First, Observe the order, then. The godly are first absolved, before the wicked are condemned. Why? Because—

1. It is more natural to God to reward than to punish, to save than to condemn. The one is called *alienum opus*, 'his strange work,' Isa. 28:21. His self-inclination bendeth him to the one more than to the other. The absolution of the good maketh for the manifestation of his mercy, the attribute wherein God delighteth, Micah 7:18. But his justice, as to the punitive part of it, it is last. God doth good of his own accord, but punishment is extorted and forced from him.

2. It is suitable to Christ's love to begin with the saints. He is so pronely inclined to them, that he taketh their cause first in hand. He parted from them with thoughts of returning to them again.

3. For the godly's sake, that they be not for any while terrified with that dreadful doom which shall pass on the reprobate; and that afterwards become judges of the wicked, by their vote and suffrage, when absolved themselves, 1 Cor. 6:3.

4. For the wicked, that they may understand and be affected with their loss, and so be made more sensible of their own folly. Christ will, in their sight, put glory and honour upon his good servants, that they may have a stinging and vexatious sense of that happiness which they have forsaken. Whether it be for this or that reason, let us the better bear it here. When judgment beginneth at the house of

God, as it often doth, 1 Peter 4:17, there absolution beginneth at the house of God; and if upon us God first show his displeasure against sin, it is for the bettering of the saints, and reforming the world. First Christ will take in hand our absolution and coronation before he passeth sentence against the wicked.

Secondly, The next thing observable is the title given to Christ, 'Then shall the King say.' Christ first calleth himself the Son of man, ver. 31, because in human nature he administereth this judgment; afterward sets forth himself by the notion of a shepherd, ver. 32, because of his office and charge about the flock, and then to show it in the exact discrimination he shall make between cattle and cattle. But now the notion is varied, 'The King shall say.' Partly because it belongeth to his kingly office to pass sentence, and prefer his faithful subjects to dignity and honour, as also to punish the disobedient Partly because in that day he shall discover himself in all his royal magnificence, and call the godly to him, and solemnly put them in possession of the promised glory. The King shall crown and absolve us: it shall be a tribunal act; and therefore valid and authentic. When the Redeemer of the world, as King, shall then sit in judgment in all his royalty, he shall then put this honour upon the saints.

Thirdly, The next thing is—

1. The compellation used, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.'

[1.] Observe in the general, it is a friendly compellation, used to such as were thought to be in favour with God. Witness Laban's words to Abraham's servant; Gen. 24:31, 'Come in, thou blessed of the Lord;' and Judges 17:2, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord.' Those that were counted dear and beloved of the Lord were thus treated and spoken to. And because of the high favour vouchsafed to the Virgin Mary, in being the mother of the Son of God, it is said, 'All generations shall

call thee blessed,' Luke 1:28, 42, 48. But what an honour is this, when Christ shall pronounce us to be so with his own mouth: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.'

[2.] More particularly, two terms must be explained—(1.) 'Blessed;' (2.) 'Of my Father.'

First, 'Blessed.' This term is—

(1.) Opposed to the world's judgment of them. The world despiseth them, and counteth them execrable, vile, and cursed. Therefore it is said, Mat. 5:44, 'Bless them that curse you;' and Mat. 5:11, 'Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil of you for my name's sake.' He is blessed whom Christ blesseth. The world rails at us as cursed miscreants, unfit to live in human societies. The world saith, *Abite maledicti*; 'Away, ye cursed;' it is not fit for such a one to live. But Christ saith, *Venite benedicti*, 'Come, ye blessed.' We should set one against the other. The least thing intended in this compellation is an absolution from the reproaches of the world and their censures, whether rashly vented, or pronounced under a colour of law and church power. They are not so ready to curse and fulminate dreadful censures on the true worshippers of Christ as he is to acquit and absolve them. Their Redeemer in judgment will call them blessed, and publish to the world that all the censures of wicked men were preposterous and perverse.

(2.) The term is opposed to the sentence of the law. The world's obloquy is the less to be stood upon, as being the product of wrath, bitterness, and hatred. But the law of God, that containeth in it the highest reason in the world, pronounceth them accursed: Gal. 3:10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all that is written in the law to do them.' And to this sentence we were once subject, and were so to look upon ourselves, Eph. 2:3. Whatever we were in the

purpose of God, our duty is to look upon what we are in the sentence of the law of God; and so we were all of us condemned to a curse. And the wicked, that never changed copy and tenure, lie still under that curse; as Christ himself showeth in his sentence on them, ver. 41, 'Depart, ye cursed.' The curse of the law taketh them by the throat, and casteth them into eternal torments. The devil would have that sentence executed upon us now, according to our deserts; but the judge on the throne pronounceth us blessed, as having taken hold of the privilege of the new covenant, and so escaped the curse of the law. In this term our justification is implied, Acts 3:19, Christ doth in effect say, These my friends and servants deserved in themselves to be accursed and miserable for ever, but I have made satisfaction to God for them, and pronounce them blessed, and free from all sin and misery.

(3.) The term is opposed to their own fears. Not only doth the world condemn us, and Satan urge the curse of the law against us, as having transgressed the bonds and rules of our duty in many cases, but our own trembling hearts are ever and anon casting up many a fearful thought: What shall become of us to all eternity? This fear is so strong, and rooted in the hearts of the godly, that it is a long time ere the promises of the gospel can vanquish and quell it; though the messengers of Christ come and tell them of the tender mercies of God, that there is enough in the merits of Christ, of the privileges and immunities offered by the new covenant, and beseech them that they would not obstinately lift up their fears against the whole design of Christ in the gospel, yet all will not do: if they can get a little peace and rest from accusations of conscience, it is almost all they can attain unto in the world: 'Perfect love casteth out fear,' 1 John 4:10. But then the supreme judge, before whom all must stand or fall, will assure them with his own mouth that they are blessed; and therefore

they shall fully get rid of all disquieting and tormenting fears. He shall say, Tremble no more; 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.'

(4.) It noteth what God hath done for them to bring them to this estate of blessedness: Eph. 1:3, 'Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' He hath loved them, and enriched them with grace, heaped many spiritual favours upon them, which now they are to receive the consummation and accomplishment of. *Dei benedicere est benefacere*—when we bless God, we declare him blessed; when God blesseth us, he maketh us blessed; his saying is doing. Since ye are elected, called, justified, sanctified, at the will of my Father, come and freely possess yourselves of all that you have hoped, longed, and waited for.

Secondly, 'Of my Father.'

(1.) In this expression he pointeth at the fountain cause of all our happiness; the beginning of our salvation was from a higher cause than our own holiness, yea, than Christ's merit, from the favour and blessing of God the Father. He was the principal efficient cause and ultimate end of the work of our redemption and the saints' blessedness. Christ as mediator is but the way to the Father, John 16:6. It is the Father appointed Christ, gave him to us, John 3:16, gave them to Christ, John 17:6, and in time brought them to close with his grace, John 6:44. It is the Father that prepared this kingdom for them before the foundation of the world; they are the Father's chosen ones, those whom the Father loveth.

(2.) This expression shows how the divine persons glorify one another. As the Spirit glorifieth the Son, John 16:14, so here the Son glorifieth the Father, and referreth all to him; he doth not say, My redeemed ones, but 'Ye blessed of my Father,' they are not less

beloved and blessed by the Father than by the Son who redeemed them; blessed in the Father's love who elected them, gave them to Christ, sent Christ and accepted his ransom, declared his will in willing their glorification.

2. The invitation, in two words, δεῦτε, κληρονομήσατε; both have their emphasis and proper signification: the one signifieth our entrance upon the glorified estate, the other our everlasting possession of it.

[1.] Δεῦτε, 'Come.' To the wicked he saith 'Depart,' but to the saints, 'Come.' As the quintessence of all misery lieth in the one, so the consummation of all blessedness in the other. He had said before, Mat. 11:28, 'Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;' but that was but an acquaintance at a distance, and some remote service we were called unto. But now, Come into my heart, my bosom, my glory. Our nearest communion with Christ is not till we be translated into heaven. Come, draw near to me; be not afraid of my majesty. This was it the saints longed for, and now they enjoy it: 'When shall I come and appear before God?' saith holy David, Ps. 42:2. You that had a heart upon my first invitation to come to me, and seek after me in the kingdom of grace, come near to me now in the kingdom of glory. The godly do not so much desire to come near to Christ, as Christ desireth to come near to them. Where have you been all this while? Come, come; I am ready to receive you; you are welcome guests to me: we have been too long asunder. Oh! how ravishing will this be to every gracious heart that loved and longed for this day!

[2.] Κληρονομήσατε, 'Inherit.' Our happy and blessed estate we have and hold by inheritance: 1 Peter 3:9, 'Ye are called to inherit a blessing.' That noteth a tenure free, full, and sure. This heritage—

(1.) Is free. We do not possess it as bondmen or servants only; we do not come to this happiness by our own earning and purchase; but as heirs of Christ. Adam's tenure was that of a servant; the blessings he expected from God were mere wages. We hold promises in another manner. Our title is by adoption, which we have immediately upon closing with Christ, John 1:12, by virtue of our sonship, Rom. 8:17; not by merit, but free gift, Rom. 6:23.

(2.) A full tenure. As children under age differ but little from a servant; but we come then as heirs to our full right. A child, though he be an heir, and owner of all his father's inheritance in hope, yet as long as he is a minor, or under age, he differeth little or nothing from a servant in point of subjection, and as to free government and enjoyment of his rights and goods. But now, to this inheritance we come as meet heirs. They distinguish of *jus hereditarium*, and *jus aptitudinale*—an hereditary right and an aptitudinal right. Now, when we have believed, suffered, and been exercised enough, we shall receive our full inheritance, 'being made meet for it,' Col. 1:12.

(3.) A sure title. It was given us by the Father, and purchased by the Son; and we hold it by this tenure for ever. God the Father gave it: Luke 12:32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom.' And Christ hath purchased it, Heb. 9:15; it is left us as a legacy by him, John 17:24; and he liveth for ever to be the executor of his own testament, Heb. 7:25; so that now we are past all danger when once admitted into possession.

3. Here is the description of that happy estate we are invited unto. Where observe—

[1.] The notion by which it is expressed; it is 'a kingdom.' What can be thought of more magnificent and glorious than a kingdom? It is called a kingdom—

(1.) Partly with respect to Christ, who is our head and chief; in whose glory we shall all participate and share, in our places and capacities. Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, and we shall reign with him as kings; for he hath made us a royal priesthood, 1 Peter 2:9; and Rev. 1:6, 'He hath washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God;' and Rev. 5:10, 'And hath made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign with him.' It is begun on earth spiritually, but it is perfected in heaven gloriously, where the saints shall be as so many crowned kings.

(2.) And partly with respect to the very thing itself. Our blessed estate shall be an estate of the highest dignity and dominion, of the fullest joy and content that heart can wish for. We have no higher notions whereby to express a blessed and happy estate; and therefore our eternal glory, whereof we are partakers, is thus set forth; especially to counterbalance our mean and low estate in the world: James 2:5, 'God hath chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom;' 'The saints shall have dominion in the morning,' Ps. 49:14. They shall sit with Christ as kings upon the throne, to execute the judgment written. Oh! how should this warm our hearts with the thoughts of these things!

(3.) Partly with respect to our loss by the fall. In the creation God put man in dominion, but by subjecting ourselves to the creature, who was made to be under our feet, we lost our kingdom, and are become slaves under the power of brutish lusts; and till our blessed estate, we never fully recover it again; but then we are absolutely free, and at liberty to love and serve God.

Well, then, it is no mean thing Christ inviteth us unto, but unto a kingdom, which we shall all jointly and severally possess. There are two quarrellous pronouns, meum and tuum, mine and thine, which

are the occasion of all the strifes in the world. These shall be excluded out of heaven as the common barrettors and makebates. There is no envy, no uncharitableness. There one cannot say to another, This part of this glorious kingdom is mine, that is yours; for every heir of this kingdom shall be as much an heir as if he were sole heir. Here we straiten others as much as we are enlarged ourselves; but there each one hath his full proportion in that blessed estate; each hath the whole, and the rest never the less; as the same speech may be heard entirely by me and all, as the light of the sun serveth all the world; another hath not the less, because I enjoy the whole of it.

Secondly, The adjunct of this kingdom is that it was prepared for us. The word signifieth made ready. God made ready this state of happiness long ere we were ready for the possession of it. Eternal love laid the foundation of it. Merit of infinite value carried on the building, and powerful and effectual grace still pursueth the work in our hearts; for we must be prepared for the kingdom, as well as this kingdom prepared for us. So that, in short, this kingdom was prepared for us—

1. By the Father's love. It was his own love and most free goodness that inwardly moved him to do all this for us: Luke 12:32, 'It is your Father's good pleasure.'

2. By the Son's merit and mediation, who 'died that we should live together with him,' 1 Thes. 5:10.

3. By the sanctification of the Spirit, by which we are fitted for this estate, 2 Cor. 5:5.

1. The Father's love. The preparation is ascribed unto God: 1 Cor. 2:9, 'The things which God hath prepared for them that love him;' and Heb. 11:16, 'For God hath prepared for them a city.' Particularly by

God the Father. So Mat. 20:23, 'It is not mine to give, but to them for whom it was prepared of my Father.' The Father's act may be thus conceived: God loved us so much, as he decreed to give Christ for us, that by his precious blood he might purchase and acquire for us a blessedness in heaven; and in the fulness of time accordingly sent him into the world for that end, and bound himself by eternal paction and covenant that all that believe in his name should have this kingdom. This was the preparation of his decree.

2. Jesus Christ, by way of execution of this decree, maketh a further preparation, when by his death he purchased it, and by his ascension went to seize upon it in our name: John 14:2, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' As Christ by his death did purchase a right and title to heaven, so by his ascension he prosecuteth and applieth that right. He is gone, as our harbinger, to take up rooms for us. As the high priest entered into the most holy place with the names of the children of Israel upon his breast and shoulders, and with the blood of the sacrifices, so he hath entered heaven with our names, to present the merit of his blood continually, and to pour out the Spirit to fit us for glory: this is his errand and business in heaven, and he is not unmindful of it.

3. The Spirit prepareth us, without which all the rest would come to no effect; for it is the wisdom of God to dispose all things into their apt and proper places. Therefore the persons are prepared, as well as the place: Rom. 9:23, 'Vessels of mercy, which he hath aforehand prepared unto glory.' He worketh faith in their hearts, giveth them a title, and by sanctifying prepareth them for the possession and enjoyment of it: 'He that worketh us for this self-same thing is God,' 2 Cor. 5:5.

Thirdly, The application or appropriation of this preparation to the persons that shall now enjoy it, 'For you;' which respects not only the qualification, but the persons.

1. Not only for such as you, but for you particularly. In the general, heaven was prepared for believers. God never intended unbelievers should have such a glorious estate; such as love the world do not prize nor long for this happiness, and therefore it is fit they should never enjoy it; for though the preparation be a work of abundant mercy, yet that mercy is so tempered and limited by his wisdom and justice, that it will not permit him to give such holy things to dogs, or cast pearls before swine. No; it was prepared to be enjoyed only by believers and holy ones.

2. For you personally and determinatively. This is most agreeable to Christ's scope and sense, for all the conditions were also prepared for them. God did elect us to faith and holiness, as well as to eternal life. Faith is the fruit of election, not a cause; he did not choose us because we were holy, or because he did foresee that we would be holy, but that we might be holy, Eph. 1:4; that, being sanctified and renewed by the Spirit, we might be placed in the new Jerusalem. For you in person, that is Christ's meaning.

Fourthly, The antiquity or ancientness of this preparation, 'From the foundation of the world;' that is, from all eternity; for the scripture goeth to the highest point of time unto which we can ascend in' our thoughts. So that ἀπὸ καταβολῆς signifieth as much as πρὸ καταβολῆς; as it is expressly said, Eph. 1:4, 'Before the foundation of the world.' The phrase is ordinary in scripture, and is as much as to say, from all eternity, or before any time was; for God's purposes are as he is, eternal and without beginning; therefore, if we speak of God's intention and purpose, it was before all worlds. Those that

understand this, 'For you,' that is, for persons so qualified, will deny the meaning of the phrase to be that the dignities of the kingdom of heaven were designed to be the reward of all the faithful servants of Jesus Christ before all worlds; and they that know the scriptures cannot but conclude that from all eternity he made choice of us to be justified, sanctified, and glorified. The elective love of God is of an ancient standing, even from all eternity, and therefore most free, there being nothing in the elect before they had a being to move his love towards them; and this will be the glory of his grace at that day, that we are invited into that estate that was prepared for us long before: and who are we, that the thoughts of God should be taken up about us so long since? Titus 3:2, 'Which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;' so 2 Tim. 1:9, 'Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, according to his purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ before the world began.' He indented then with Christ to bring us to what we shall at last enjoy. But if any morosely insist upon the phrase, because it doth not necessarily signify eternity, we must then understand that though the purpose of God were from everlasting, yet the things designed and acted by him, they take their beginning in time, or with time; and so the words must be understood—(1.) Of preparing the place which shall be the state of the blessed. The third heaven is the dwelling-place of the saints, which was framed about the beginning of the creation. So good and gracious was our God, that he did not make man or angel till he prepared a place convenient for them. Or (2.) To the promise presently made upon Adam's fall; but the former exposition is more simple.

Well, then, you have heard what entertainment the faithful shall have from Christ at his coming, so far as our dull minds can conceive of it, and with weak and imperfect words can express it to you. Now let us see what use we may make of all this.

Use 1. Let us be convinced that there is such an estate, and will be such a time, and that there is no true blessedness but this enjoyment of God in the kingdom of heaven, that we shall then have. The world hath been much puzzled about disputes of happiness, and the way to it. The philosophers, some placed it in knowledge, some in that virtue which they knew, some in pleasure; some in this, some in that. Austin out of Varro reckoneth up two hundred and eighty-six opinions about the chief good. They erred thus because they sought it in so many things, whereas it consists in one—the enjoyment of God; and because they sought it in this world, where all things are mortal and frail, and we can find not one thing that can make us completely happy. This discovery was left for the scriptures, which teach us that our happiness lieth in God alone, and that our perfect enjoyment of him, in body and soul, is reserved for Christ's coming, when there is a perfect conformity to God and communion with him: 1 John 3:2, 'Beloved, we are now the children of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be, but we know when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' The Lord revealeth his truth to us in the word, but before we can be convinced of it we must be enlightened by the Spirit; for spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2:14. We may talk of these things by rote one to another, and have an assent to them, which is called a non-contradiction, though not a positive understanding and conviction of the truth of them: 'Believest thou this?' John 11:26.

2. When we believe it, let us look for it and long for it, and live in the hopeful expectation of this blessed time, when all these things shall be accomplished. Therefore, if we believe such a thing, we must long for it, and live in the hope of it: Titus 2:13, 'Looking for the blessed hope.' Hope showeth itself—

(1.) Partly by frequent and serious thoughts and delightful meditations of the thing hoped for. Thoughts are the spies and messengers of hope; it sendeth them into the land of promise, to bring the soul tidings thence. It is impossible a man can hope for anything but he will be thinking of it, for it is the nature of this affection to set the mind a-work, and to preoccupy and forestall the contentments we expect before they come by serious contemplations, and feast the soul with images and suppositions of things to come, as if they were already present. So should we demean ourselves as if the judgment were set, and the judge upon his white throne, and we heard him blessing and cursing, absolving and condemning. The heart will be where the treasure is, Mat. 6:18. As if we saw Christ with his faithful ones about him. If a beggar were adopted to the succession of a crown, he would please himself in thinking of the happiness, honour, and pleasure of the kingly estate. If you did hope to be coheirs with Christ, or to inherit the kingdom prepared for you, you would think of it more than you do. Our musings discover the temper of our hearts. A carnal heart is always thinking of building barns, advancing the family higher, our worldly increase: Luke 12:18, 'I will pull down my barns, and build bigger, and bestow my fruits.' And those in James 4:13, 'To-morrow we will go to such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain.' It is usual with men to feed themselves with the pleasure of their hopes; as young heirs spend upon their estate before they possess it.

(2.) By hearty groans, sighs, and longings: Rom. 8:23, 'We groan in ourselves.' They have had a taste of the clusters of Canaan in private justification; they can never be soon enough with Christ: when shall it once be? They are still looking out, and the nearer to enjoyment the more impatient of the want: 'The earnest expectation of the creature,' Rom. 8:19. Stretching out the head to see if they can spy a thing a great way off; as Judges 5, 'She looked through the lattice:

why is his chariot so long a-coming?' They would have a fuller draught of consolation, more access to him, and communion with him.

(3.) By lively tastes and feelings. It is called a lively hope, 1 Peter 1:3; not a living hope only, but lively; because it quickens the heart, and filleth it with a solid joy, Rom. 5:2; 1 Peter 1:8. Where we have such a fruition, the very looking and longing giveth us a taste.

3. This hope should put us upon serious diligence and earnest pursuit after this blessedness, 1 Peter 1:13. Partly as it purgeth the heart from lusts: 1 John 3:3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' These are the months of our purification, wherein we are made meet to be partakers of the saints in light; we are a-preparing for heaven, as that is prepared for us, and it is a lively expectation which produceth this. That puts us upon mortification and diligence in cleansing the soul, that we may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of God. Partly as it withdraweth our hearts from present things, and minding earthly things: 'But our conversation is in heaven,' Phil. 3:18–21. A man that is always looking and longing for the world to come, the present world is nullified to him, and he hath a mean esteem of all secular interests and contentments in comparison of those other which his soul looketh after; as a man looking upon the sun cannot see an object less glorious. On the contrary, our overprizing secular contentments necessarily breedeth an undervaluing of matters heavenly; and those that have so great a relish for the world and the delights of the flesh, they know not what eternal life meaneth. The Israelites longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt before they tasted the clusters of Canaan; by faith Moses refused the honours and pleasures of Pharaoh's court. We cannot value real happiness till we are brought to contemn earthly happiness. Partly as it urgeth to care and

diligence, and constancy in obedience. This is the spring that sets all the wheels a-going: Phil. 3:13, 'I press towards the mark, because of the high prize of our calling.' What is the reason christians are so earnest and serious? There is an excellent glory set before them; the race is not for trifles. We want vigour, and find such a tediousness in the Lord's work, because we do not think of the kingdom of heaven prepared for us, 2 Cor. 8:8, 9; 1 Cor. 15:53, 'We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord: wherefore we labour, that whether we are present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' If it be tedious to us to be at work for God, this tediousness will not consist with the cheerful remembrance of that great blessedness which he hath prepared for us. How eminent should we be in the labours of holiness, to whom this estate was so peculiarly designed! Partly in self-denial; men venture all in this vessel of hope. Self-denial is seen in refusing and resisting temptations of honour and profit. Sin maketh many promises, and so prevaieth by a carnal hope. Balaam was enticed by proffers of riches to curse God's people; Babylon's fornications are presented in a golden cup. Now faith and hope sets promise against promise, heaven against earth, the pleasures at God's right hand against carnal delights; as the kingdoms of the world are nothing to this glorious kingdom. Partly in charity; laying up treasure in heaven: Luke 12:33, 'Being rich in good works,' 1 Tim. 6:18. I call this self-denial, because it is a loss for the present, Eccles. 2. So in hazarding interests: christians' blessings are future, their crosses are present, Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:12.

Thus you see there are some who are carried on by the hopes of heaven to make serious preparation; others are wholly wedded and addicted to present things. The world, morally and spiritually considered, is divided into two ranks; the one of the devil, the other of God. Some seek their rest and happiness on earth, others eternal

felicity in heaven. By nature all are of this earthly society, in the kingdom of darkness, and strangers to the commonwealth and city of God; but when grace hath wrought in them the belief of this coming of Christ, and the hope of this blessed estate is rooted in us, we are always purging out of fleshly lusts, and weaning our hearts from the world, exercising ourselves to godliness, and denying our worldly interests.

4. This hope must moderate our fears, sorrows, and cares, so as no temporal thing should unreasonably affect us: Luke 12:32, 'Fear not, little flock.' The fear is allayed; the world cannot take away anything from us so good as Christ will give unto us. If our earthly estate be sequestered, or anyway taken from us, we have a better estate in heaven, Heb. 10:34. If we be reproached and disgraced in this world, yet we shall be kings and priests, and for ever be honoured in heaven. If banished and driven from place to place, so that we can find no rest nor safety, but are wearied out with our removals, let us consider we have a place of eternal abode in heaven, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, of which none can dispossess us. Our sufferings may be many, long, and grievous, but then all will be at an end when Christ shall place us at his right hand: Heb. 6:19, 'Which hope have we as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil,' We have a sure anchor in the stormy gusts of temptations: 1 Thes. 5:8, 'Let us put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation;' and Eph. 6:17, 'And take the helmet of salvation.' Hope is our helmet in the dreadful day of battle. As long as we can lift up our heads and look to heaven, we should patiently bear all calamities. We shall at last hear this blessed voice, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

SERMON VI

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.—MAT. 25:35, 36.

WE have seen the sentence, now the reason of the sentence. For, the illative particle, showeth that many like the sentence, would be glad to be entertained with a 'Come, ye blessed of my Father;' but turn back upon the reason, to visit, feed, and clothe; they have no mind, or to any other serious duties and acts of faith and self-denial. But we must regard both; and I hope in a business of such moment you will not be skittish and impatient of the word of exhortation. I shall first vindicate the words, and then give you some observations from them.

First, Vindicate them, and assert their proper sense and intendment; for upon the reading four doubts may arise in your minds:—

1. That good works are the reason of this sentence.
2. That the good works of the faithful are only mentioned, and not the evil they have committed.
3. That only works of mercy, or the fruits of love, are specified.
4. All cannot express their love and self-denial this way.

Let me clear these things, and our way will be the more easy and smooth afterward.

1. For the first doubt, that works are assigned as the reason of the sentence of absolution; for the papists thence infer their merit and causal influence upon eternal life. I answer—

[1.] It is one thing to give a reason of the sentence, another to express the cause of the benefit received and adjudged to us by that sentence. A charter may be given to a sort of people out of mere grace, and privileges promised to all such as are under such a qualification, though that qualification no way meriteth those privileges and that grace promised; as if a king should offer pardon and preferment to rebels that lay down their arms and return to their duty and allegiance, and live in such bounds; their returning to their duty doth not merit this pardon, for it was a mere act of grace in the prince; much less doth their return to their duty, and living peaceably within their ancient bounds, merit the honours and advancement promised; yet this is pleadable in court, and the judge that taketh knowledge of the cause, taketh the reason of his sentence from their peaceable living within their bounds, whereby he judgeth them capable of the honours promised and expected. So here; God of his mere grace promiseth the pardon of our sins, and to bestow upon us eternal life, if we believe and repent, and return to the duty we owed him by our creation. Our obedience is not the cause of our pardon, or of our right to glory, but his free promise; but yet this qualification must be taken notice of by our judge in the great day, as the reason of his sentence. The sprinkling of the door-posts with blood was not a proper cause to move the destroying angel to pass over, but according to that rule he must proceed; the admitting all that have a ticket to any solemnity is not the cause why they are worthy to be received. This is clear, that a person is justified in some other way than a sentence is justified. These works are produced to justify the righteousness of his sentence before the whole world. A sinner is justified by faith; Christ's sentence by the believer's obedience.

[2.] That works merit not the blessings promised and adjudged to us, is evident; for they are due: Luke 17:10, 'So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.' And they are imperfect: Phil. 3:12, 'Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect.' And they are gifts of God, for which we ought to give him thanks, 2 Cor. 8:1; a grace of God bestowed on us; and gifts have no equality with the reward, Rom. 8:18. And they are done by servants redeemed by an infinite price: 1 Peter 1:19, 'With the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot;' being already appointed 'heirs of eternal life,' Rom. 8:17; deserving eternal death, Rom. 6:17; and that need continually implore the mercy of God for the pardon of sin. So much as you ascribe to man's merit, so much you detract from the grace of God; and the more sin is acknowledged, the more illustrious is grace: Rom. 5:20, 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' You cross the counsel of God, all glorying in himself: 1 Cor. 1:29, 'That no flesh should glory in his presence;' and Deut. 9:4-6, 'Speak not thou in thy heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people.'

[3.] That works are produced as the undoubted evidences and fruits of a true and sound faith. Justification is opposed to accusation

before God's tribunal. A double accusation may be brought against us—that we are sinners, or guilty of the breach of the first covenant, and that we are no sound believers, having not fulfilled the conditions of the second. From the first accusation we are justified by faith, from the latter we are justified by works, and that not only in this world, but in the day of judgment. Christ's commission and charge is to give eternal life to true believers, and the mark of true believers is holiness. Therefore, if his judgment be right, by producing this fruit and effect it must be justified. A judge is to proceed *secundum regulas juris, et allegata et probata*, as to the parties judged; and because in the day of judgment the covenant of grace hath the force of a law, therefore it belongeth to Christ as a judge to see we have fulfilled the condition of it, which is faith; and that our faith is true is proved by works. When we are first pressed with sin, because the promise of justification, or remission of sin, requireth faith, it must be embraced by faith, and taken hold of by faith; our faith must pitch upon it, draw comfort from it, even before good works are done by us. But because the next accusation will presently arise, as if our faith were not true, we must be justified from this accusation by good works, not be contented with one or two good works, but abounding in all, that thus we may be justified more and more, and approved by our judge.

[4.] That faith is implied in all the works mentioned is evident—(1.) From Christ's scope. The manner of judging those in the visible church is intended. And (2.) The expression showeth it; for it is Christ they respected in his members. Now it requireth faith to see Christ in a poor beggar or prisoner, to love Christ in them above our worldly goods, and actually to part with them for Christ's sake. Self-denial is the fruit of faith. It is not merely the relieving of the poor, but the doing of it as in and to Christ. (3.) There is a near link between faith and works. Faith is not sound and perfect unless it

produce these works, and these works are not acceptable unless they were the works of faith, and done in faith.

2. The second doubt is, whether the good works of the faithful shall be only mentioned, and not the evil? I answer—

So some would collect from this scheme and draught set down by Christ. It is a problem disputed, with probabilities on both sides, by good men. Some reason from the terms by which pardon is expressed; as by the blotting out of sin, remembering transgressions no more, cast into the depths of the sea. It is like God will cover them, because repented of and forgiven in the world. On the other side, they urge the exact reckoning, Rev. 20:11; the general particles, 2 Cor. 5:10, and Eccles. 12:13; and that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment, Mat. 12:36. I would not interpose; I cannot say absolutely that their sins shall not be mentioned at all; for Acts 3:19, it is said, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Certainly not to their trouble and confusion; possibly not particularly. These scriptures are not cogent to prove they shall. For it may be meant distributively; all the evil of the wicked, and the good of the godly. However, these scriptures should breed an awe in our hearts.

3. A third doubt is, that only works of mercy and charity, rather than piety, are mentioned by our Lord and Saviour. I answer—

[1.] It is clear that the special is put for the general, and an act of self-denying obedience is put for all the rest. In other places a more general expression is put; as Mat. 16:27, 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works;' and 2 Cor. 5:10, 'For we

must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;' and Rev. 20:12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' And therefore acts of mercy are not intended to be cried up alone, as separate from all other acts of piety and charity to God and men; yea, all acts of charity, for which we are accountable unto God, are not mentioned; comforting the afflicted, reproving the faulty, instructing the weak, counselling the erring, praying for others. Therefore, under these works of charity, all the fruits of faith are understood, and the real gracious constitution of the heart that must produce them: 1 Cor. 13:3, 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me not,' οὐδὲν εἶμι. But Christ doth not express that so plainly, because he would show that this judgment shall proceed according to what is visible and sensible.

[2.] Christ singled out works of mercy for the evidence; because the Jews had been more exact and diligent in the observing the ceremonies of external worship, but negligent of these things. Therefore doth God so often by the prophets tell them of mercy above sacrifices: Hosea 6:6, 'For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.' And mercy above fasting, Isa. 58:6, 7. These are duties never out of season, and including a real benefit to mankind. God preferreth them before external rites of worship.

[3.] These are most evident and sensible discoveries, and so fitted to be produced as fruits of faith. There is a demonstration of the soundness of it; a signis notioribus. These are most conspicuous, and

so fittest to justify believers before all the world, who reckon good and evil most by the bodily life. Therefore doth Christ instance in acts of bodily rather than spiritual charity. Not in reprovng, converting, counselling, but in feeding and clothing.

[4.] These are acts wherein we do exercise faith and self-denial. In imparting spiritual gifts to others we lose nothing ourselves, as our candle loseth nothing by communicating light to another. Christ would have us venture something on our heavenly hopes; and not please ourselves with a religion that costs us nothing, and puts us to no charges. Alms is an expensive duty; here is something parted with, and that upon reasons of faith: Eccles. 11:1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days;' Prov. 19:17, 'He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he giveth them, will he pay it again.'

[5.] Christ would hereby represent the excellency of charity, and commend it to the covetous niggardly world. It is the duty wherein we do very much resemble God and Christ; and all his followers should be like him. These are all works of God; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, we imitate him in this, are instruments of his providence. Mercy is a very lovely thing, an imitation of the divine nature. Our Lord told us, Acts 20:35, it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive. It cometh nearest the nature of God. So Christ himself went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed. And by helpfulness to others we do very much resemble Christ. I cannot exclude this, since mercy is mentioned only.

4. A fourth doubt is this, that all cannot express their love and self-denial this way; some are so very poor and miserable. I answer—

[1.] All must have that faith which will work by love: Gal. 5:6, 'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love;' and self-denial, which some way or other must be expressed: Mat. 16:24, 'Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' By denying the case of the flesh, if not the interests of it; to be serviceable in their place, whatsoever it be.

[2.] Though some be so needy themselves that they cannot clothe the naked or feed the hungry, yet they may visit the sick, resort to such as are in prison. Every one, in some kind or other, may be the object of his neighbour's charity; so may every one be either the instrument or agent in the doing of it. The rich may stand in need of the help or prayers of the poor, and the poor of the bounty of the rich. If we have a heart to part with all for Christ, we have that faith which will carry away the price of gospel privileges. All must have such a value for Christ, see such an excellency in the world to come, that they have a heart and disposition to part with all, rather than quit the profession of the gospel, or neglect the duties thereof, Mat. 13:44, 45.

These things premised, I come now to observe these points:—

First, That at the general judgment all men shall receive their doom, or judgment shall be pronounced according to their works; for Christ produceth works both in the sentence of absolution and condemnation.

Secondly, That Christ hath so ordered his providence about his members, that some of them are exposed to necessities and wants, others in a capacity to relieve them.

Thirdly, That works of charity, done out of faith and love to Christ, are of greater weight and consequence than the world usually taketh them to be.

Other points may be raised, but to these three all the rest may be reduced.

First, That at the general judgment all men shall receive their doom, or judgment shall be pronounced according to their works.

Of the wicked there is no doubt but that they shall receive according to their works; they stand on their own bottom; their works deserve punishment; their doom and sentence is justified by their works. But for the godly, it is also true that life everlasting shall be awarded, *secundum opera, non propter opera*. Not that this kingdom is by right due to us for our works; but the righteousness of the sentence is manifested by producing our works. This will appear if we consider—(1.) The business, scope, or end of the day of judgment; (2.) The respect of good works, and how far they are considered.

1. The business of that day is not only to glorify God's free love and mercy, but also his holiness rewarding justice and truth. Then God will not only glorify the riches of his glorious grace, in the electing of his people out of his love and favour to them, without anything considered in them—('Come, ye blessed of my Father.' The first cause of our salvation is made the blessing of the Father)—but also his remunerating justice, veracity, or truth. This maketh for our purpose now.

[1.] His holiness. The holy God delighteth in holiness. He will now manifest it in the sun, the estimation he hath of the holiness of his people. The veil is taken away; now it is made matter of sense. It is a delight to him. Christ mentions their graces and services as things

which are pleasing and acceptable to him: Ps. 5:4, 'Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness.' But he hath pleasure in the holiness of his people. The upright are his delight, and as such will he speak of them, and commend them, and represent them to the world.

[2.] His remunerating justice. The justice of God requireth that there should be different proceeding with them that differ among themselves; that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown, whether he hath sown according to the flesh or the spirit; and the fruit of his doings be given into his bosom. Therefore, those whom Christ will receive into everlasting life must appear faithful and obedient; for then Christ will judge the world in righteousness, Acts 17:31.

[3.] That he may show his veracity and faithfulness. The faithful God will make good his promises, and reward all the labours and patience and faithfulness of his servants, according to his promises to them. If his promises take notice of works, his justice will. God is not unfaithful or unrighteous, 'to forget your work and labour of love, which you have showed to his name,' Heb. 6:10.

2. The respect of good works, and how far they are considered.

[1.] They are perfectional accomplishments. Those that have done them are lovely objects in his sight, as being conformed to his nature and pattern. Can we imagine that God should bid the saints love one another for their holiness, and count them the excellent ones of the earth, Ps. 16:3, how poor and despicable soever they be as to their outward condition, and that he himself should not love them the more? We, that have but a drop of the divine nature, hate impure sinners. Lot's righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, 2 Peter 2:8. And we find a complacency and delight in

the good. And can we imagine, without a manifest reproach to him, that God should be so indifferent to good and evil, and that the saints should not be more lovely in his sight for their holiness? Therefore the more lovely the more endeared objects to their Redeemer.

[2.] They are qualifications to make them capable of his remunerating justice. There is in God a threefold justice:—(1.) His strict justice; (2.) His justice of bounty, or free beneficence; and (3.) As judging according to his gospel law of promise.

(1.) He may be said to be strictly just when he rewardeth man according to his perfect obedience; yet no obedience, though never so perfect, can bind him to reward man or angel.

(2.) He is just by way of bounty, when he rewardeth a man capable of reward; though not in respect of his perfect righteousness in himself, yet because he is some way righteous in respect of others that are unrighteous. So it is said, 2 Thes. 1:6, 7, 'It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble his saints; and to them that are troubled, rest,' &c. This with respect to Christ's merit, and the qualification of the parties.

(3.) The third righteousness is in performance of his promises; for though his promise be free, yet if it be once made, justice doth require it; and God is not free, but bound to perform it. Now, in these two latter respects, are they capable.

[3.] They are signs and tokens of their being approved and accepted with God, according to the gospel covenant. Christ, as God's steward, cometh to distribute the appointed reward to the heirs of glory. This is the evidence he is to proceed by. When the destroying angel was sent to destroy the first-born of the Egyptians, he was to take notice

of the sign of sprinkling of blood on the door-posts, Exod. 12. Not that that blood deserved; but it signified that there dwelt Israelites.

[4.] They are measures according to the degrees of grace, and our abounding in the work of the Lord: 2 Cor. 9:6, 'He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.' The reward is more full or sparing according to what we have done or suffered for God.

Use. To set us right in the doctrine of grace and works. We have to do with three parties—

(1.) The pharisaical legalist; (2.) The carnal gospeller; and, (3.) The broken-hearted and serious Christian.

1. The legalist that trusts in himself that he is righteous, and hopeth to be accepted with God for his works' sake. Trusting in works is very natural and very dangerous. It is very natural, because of the law written upon our hearts. We all come into the world with a sense of a duty-covenant; and because every one would be sufficient to his own happiness, an unhumbled soul is apt to give more to duty and personal righteousness than to Christ: Rom. 10:3, 'For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God,' οὐκ ὑπετάγησαν. A russet ragged coat of his own pleaseth a proud man better than a silken coat that is borrowed. It is dangerous; for it is contrary to all the declarations of God: Eph. 2:9, 'By grace ye are saved; not of works, lest any man should boast.' The whole progress of salvation, from its first step in regeneration till its final and last period in glorification, doth entirely flow from God's grace, and not from our works. The securing the interest of free grace in our salvation is a thing the Spirit of God is very careful of in the scriptures, the glory of grace being that which God mainly aimeth at,

Eph. 1:6, and a thing which we do naturally incline to intrench upon, and to rob him of, in whole or in part. It crosseth the great end which God aimed at in contriving of man's salvation, which was that all ground of glorying should be taken away from man, as being in the meanest or least respect a saviour to himself, and that all the glory might be ascribed completely to God in Christ, 1 Cor. 1:29–31. Christ spake a parable against those that trusted in themselves that they were righteous: Luke 18:9, 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a pharisee, the other a publican.' The one cometh appealing to justice: 'The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust,' &c.; 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' The other cometh crying out grace: 'The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.' The sinner is justified, not the worker. In short, to prevent all mistakes—

[1.] Our works, whatever they are, either works of love to God or man, and the good use of external means or common grace, are not the moving cause or inducement to incline God to give us Christ, or the grace of faith, or work of conversion before others; but this is the mere work of grace, or the mercy and good pleasure of God: Titus 3:5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.'

[2.] Works, both before and after conversion, are not that righteousness, nor any part of that righteousness, by which sin is expiated, or the wrath of God appeased, or whereby we are reconciled to God, and do originally obtain a right to eternal life; this

is only ascribed to the merit of Christ: Rom. 3:24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' The merit is in Christ's blood, Christ's obedience, his ransom and meritorious price.

[3.] Our works, or what we do to fulfil the law of God, are not that instrument by virtue of which we apply the merits of Christ to ourselves, or receive that righteousness by virtue of which we are reconciled to God. Our interest in the merits of Christ, our right to pardon of sin and grace, doth not arise from works, but merely faith, Rom. 3:22; so that in the plea of justification, or our suit for the pardon of sin, we must renounce all our good works, and wholly rely on the merits of Christ, giving up ourselves to do the will of God. Abate this, and then works indeed come in as the fruits of faith, as evidences of eternal life and the way to glory.

2. The carnal gospeller is the other person we have to do with; and to him we say—

[1.] That no man can maintain his comfort, and faithfully rely upon Christ's merits, but he that is faithful in doing his Father's will. No other faith is allowed by the scriptures for sound in the judgment of our consciences but such a faith: Gal. 5:6, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.' No other faith will be approved by Christ for sound at the last day: Mat. 7:21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'

[2.] That the doing of some good works cannot excuse men for the omission of others which be as necessary; we must not do one act of

charity only, but all. Many acts are reckoned up of one kind, to imply all the rest; not only fed, but clothed; not only clothed, but visited. Therefore, besides the goodness of the work which we are bound to do, there must be a uniformity in them. There are good works of divers kinds, many works of the same kind. To prophesy in Christ's name is a good work; to cast out devils would seem to us more excellent than these mentioned; as the workers of iniquity: Mat. 7:22, 'Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?' Ver. 23, 'Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Then there are many works of the same kind; we must not only visit, but clothe; not once, but often. The same faith which inclineth our hearts to works of one kind, will incline them to every kind; for they all stand by the same authority, and it is not agreeable with sincerity to balk any of them.

[3.] These works must be done so heartily as that it may appear we have denied all for Christ, and love him above all; or that it may appear they are fruits of faith and love. The parting with worldly goods implieth our hearts must be loosened from the love of temporal things; and the visiting of Christ in prison, which may be for righteousness' sake, implieth our victory over our fear of danger; otherwise it argueth our faith is weak and our love is cold, and so not sincere, not prevailing over us in such a degree as will argue sincerity. There is 'faith unfeigned,' 2 Tim. 1:5, and 'loving in deed and truth,' 1 John 3:18. 'Faith unfeigned,' as when temporal things seem nothing to us, and are easily parted with; and 'love in deed and in truth,' is to relieve our brethren with our goods, yea, to give our lives for them if need be, as appeareth ver. 16, 17. But alas! love in most christians is cold; it will neither take pains, nor be at charge,

much less lay down life for them, as Christ did for us; do little to maintain, comfort, or support Christ's servants in distress.

3. The broken-hearted, serious christian, that thinketh works can never have enough of his care, or too little of his trust, that is always hard at work for God, and yet seeth God must do all at last, he is persuaded that grace doth not weaken his duty, but enforce it; yet, when he hath done all, counteth himself but an unprofitable servant, and is still approving himself unto God more and more; and yet the more he doth, the more daily need he seeth of Christ. No man liveth under a greater dread of the holiness and justice of God, yet flieth oftener to his mercy. We must comfort these.

[1.] Consider, God observeth all the good that we do, and pondereth every action, of what kind soever it be; whether giving food, or clothing, or harbour, or entertainment, or visiting, or comforting; it will all be fruit abounding to your account, Phil. 4:17. The more you abound in acts of communion with God, or relief towards such as are in misery, the greater will your reward be in the last day. There is fruit for our account, and abounding for our account.

[2.] The least actions done for Christ's sake shall be rewarded by him; for some of the actions are more inconsiderable than the other; yet, if done for Christ's sake, a meal's meat, a little harbour, yea, a visit, is taken notice of by him. He doth not say, Ye feasted me, ye made me sumptuous entertainment; but, Ye gave me food, ye clothed me, ye visited, &c. The least action done for Christ's sake shall not go unrewarded: Mat. 10:42, 'Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in nowise lose his reward.'

[3.] God will pardon all their failings. Here is no mention of the evil, but the good they had done. An honest upright heart is dispensed

with as to many weaknesses: Mal. 3:17, 'I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'

I come now to the second point:—

Doct. 2. That Christ ordereth his dispensations so that some of his people are exposed to necessity, others in a capacity to relieve them.

The privileges and promises of the gospel do not exempt the one from distress, nor do the duties and rules of the gospel make the possession of riches to the other unlawful. In the one sort of good men Christ is hungry and athirst, in the other sort of good men he feedeth and clotheth them: Christ is in the giver and receiver: these want, that they may have matter of patience; those abound, that they may have matter of bounty: Abraham was rich, Lazarus that slept in his bosom was poor. It is so—

1. That he may show himself to be the governor and disposer of all things here in the world, and that he giveth honour and riches to whomsoever he will, Dan. 4:17. If these things were at the devil's disposal, God's friends should never have them.
2. To show that the bare possession is not unlawful; that it is not the having, but the ill use that bringeth so much mischief.
3. That the world may know somewhat of his favour to his people, and what prosperity he can bestow upon all if it were expedient: some diseases require cordials, others sharp and bitter potions.
4. That in the time of our exercise we may have a pledge what he will do for us hereafter, and give us in heaven.
5. That they may be instruments of his providence, to supply others that want house and harbour, and all necessaries; as the great veins

receive blood to convey it to the lesser: some are kept under affliction. We sail more safely to the haven of salvation with an adverse wind than a prosperous.

Use. If it fall to your lot to give rather than to receive, bless God in that behalf, and neglect not your duty. God could level all to an equality, but he will not, that you may be instruments of his providence to cherish them: you should be a fountain, not to keep the water to yourselves, but to overflow for the necessity of others.

I come now to the third point:—

Doct. 3. That works of charity, done out of faith and love to God, are of greater weight and consequence than the world taketh them to be.

1. There is a command of God requireth it. Next to the great duties of the gospel, nothing more enforced. To relieve the necessities of the poor is not arbitrary, but a duty required of us according to our abilities; it is charity to them, but a due debt to God, and a part of our righteousness. Stewards are to dispense the estate by the master's command.

2. It is the trial of our love to Christ. He hath made the poor his proxies and deputies. We would cozen ourselves with an empty faith, and a cheap love, if God had not devolved his right upon our brethren: 1 John 3:17, 'But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' If Christ were sick in a bed, we would visit him; if in want, we would relieve him. Christ is so nearly conjoined with his servants, that in their afflictions he is afflicted, in their comforts he is comforted; he looks upon it as done to him. The godly of old time thought themselves much honoured if they could get a prophet or an apostle to their houses: Heb. 13:1, 'Be

not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.' Here is Christ himself; will you refuse him who is heir of all things?

3. It is the great question interrogated by him at the great day of accounts. It is not, Have you heard? have you prophesied? have you ate and drank in my presence? but, Have you fed? have you clothed? have you visited? We are one day to come to this account, and what sorry accounts shall we make! So much for pleasure, for riot, for luxury, for bravery in apparel, and pomp in living, and little or nothing for God and his people; as if a steward should bring in his bill, so much spent in feasts, in rioting, in merry company, when his master's house lieth to ruin, the children starved, and the servants neglected. We are very liberal to our lusts, but sparing to God. A man that expecteth to be posed, is preparing himself, and would fain know the questions aforehand. Christ hath told us our question.

SERMON VII

Then shall the righteous answer and say, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? and thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? and naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick and in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and, say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Insomuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—MAT. 25:37–40.

WE have handled the sentence and the reason. The reason is amplified in some parabolical passages, which contain a dialogue or

interchangeable discourse between Christ the King and his elect servants. In which you may observe—(1.) Their question, ver. 37–39; (2.) Christ's reply and answer, ver. 40. Not that such formal words shall pass to and fro at the day of judgment, between the judge and the judged; but only to represent the matter more sensibly, and in a more lively and impressive way to our minds.

First, For their question; certainly it is not moved—(1.) By way of doubt or exception to the reason alleged by the judge in his sentence, there being a perfect agreement and harmony of mind and will between them. Neither (2.) Out of ignorance, as if they knew not that Christ was so much concerned in their works of love done to his children for his sake; for this they knew aforehand, that what was done to christians is done to Christ, and upon that account they do it as to Christ; and such ignorance cannot be supposed to be found in the glorified saints. (3.) Some say the question is put to express a holy wonder at what they hear and see; and no question Christ will then be admired in his saints, 2 Thes. 1:10. And three causes there may be of this wonder:—

1. Their humble sense of their own nothingness, that their services should be taken notice of and rewarded; that he should have such a respect for their mean offices of love, which they little esteemed of, and had no confidence in them.

2. The greatness of Christ's condescension, that he should have such a care of his mean servants, who were so despicable in the world.

3. The greatness of the reward. Christ shall so incomparably, above all that they could ask or think, reward his people, that they shall wonder at it. This sense is pious, taken up by most interpreters. I should acquiesce in it, but that I find the same question put by the reprobates afterwards, ver. 42–44; they use the same words;

therefore I think the words are barely parabolical, brought in by Christ that he might have occasion further to declare himself how they fed him and clothed him, and what esteem he will put upon works of charity; and to impress this truth the more upon our minds, that what is done to his people is accepted by him as if it were done to his person. However, because the former sense is useful, I shall a little insist upon it in this note.

Doct. That when Christ shall come to reward his people, they shall have great cause to wonder at all that they see, hear, and enjoy.

1. They shall wonder at the reason alleged. They that are holy ever think humbly of their own works, and therefore, considering their no-deservings, their ill-deservings, they cannot satisfy themselves in admiring and extolling the rich grace of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that he should take notice of anything of theirs, and produce it into judgment. See how they express themselves now: Ps. 143:2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant;' Non dicit, Cum hostibus tuis. So Ps. 130:3, 'If thou shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?' So 1 Cor. 4:4, 'For I know nothing by myself, yet am not I thereby justified;' Isa. 64:6, 'But we are as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' This thought they have of all they do, and their minds are not altered then, for this is the judgment of truth as well as of humility: Luke 17:10, 'When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants.' Their Lord hath taught them to say so and think so; they did not this out of compliment. And for their works of mercy, they were not to let their left hand know what their right hand did, Mat. 6:3. It is a proverb that teaches us that we should not suffer ourselves to take notice of what we give in alms, nor esteem much of it, as if there were any worth therein; and therefore, when Christ maketh such reckoning of these things, their wonder will be raised; they will say, 'Lord, when saw we thee an

hungry or athirst?' Their true and sincere humility will make them cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour.' Lord, it is thy goodness; what have we done? The saints, when they are highest, still show the lowest signs of humility to their Redeemer, and confess that all the glory they have they have it from him, and are contented to lay it down at his feet, as holding it by his acceptance, and not their own merit; they have all and hold all by his grace, and therefore would have him receive the glory of all.

2. They shall wonder at the greatness of Christ's condescension and hearty love to his servants, though poor and despicable; for in the day of judgment he doth not commemorate the benefits done to him in person in the days of his flesh, but to his members in the time of his exaltation: he doth not mention the alabaster box of precious ointment poured on his head, nor the entertainments made him when he lived upon earth, but the feeding and clothing of his hungry and naked servants. The greatest part of christians never saw Christ in the flesh; but the poor they have always with them. Kindness to these is kindness to him. Again, among these he doth not mention the most eminent, the prophets and apostles, or the great instruments of his glory in the world, but the least of his brethren, even those that are not only little and despicable in the esteem of the world, but those that are little and despicable in the church, in respect of others that are of more eminent use and service. Again, the least kindness shown unto them: Mat. 10:42, 'Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' He had spoken before of kindness to prophets and righteous men, men of eminent gifts and graces; then ordinary disciples; among these, the least and most contemptible, either as to outward condition or state of life, or to use and service, and, it may be, inward

grace. Now all this showeth what value Christ sets upon the meanest christians, and the smallest and meanest respect that is showed them. The smallness and meanness of the benefit shall not diminish his esteem of your affection: anything done to his people, as his people, will be owned and noted. When the saints, that newly came from the neglects and scorns of an unbelieving world, shall see and hear all this, what cause will they have to wonder, and say, Lord, who hath owned thee in these? Alas! in the world all is quite contrary. Let a man profess Christ, and resemble Christ in a lively manner, and own Christ thoroughly, presently he is (σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον) set up for a sign of contradiction; and that, not only among pagans, but professing christians; yea, by those that would seem to be of great note in the church, as the corner-stone was refused by the builders, 1 Peter 2:7. And therefore, when Christ taketh himself to be so concerned in their benefits and injuries, they have cause to wonder: Christ was in these, and the world knew it not.

3. At the greatness of the reward; that he should not only take notice of these acts of kindness, but so amply remunerate them. In the rewards of grace God worketh beyond human imagination and apprehension: 1 Cor. 2:9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things God hath prepared for them that love him.' We cannot, by all that we see and hear in this world, which are the senses of learning, form a conception large enough for the blessedness of this estate. Enjoyers and beholders will wonder at the grace, and bounty, and power of their Redeemer. It is a transcendent, hyperbolical weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4:17. Where is anything that they can do or suffer that is worthy to be mentioned or compared with so great a recompense? When these bodies of earth and bodies of dust shall shine like the stars in brightness, these sublime souls of ours see God face to face, these wavering and inconstant hearts of ours shall be immutably and indeclinably

fastened to love him and serve him and praise him; as without defection, so without intermission and interruption; and our ignominy turned into honour; and our misery into everlasting happiness: Lord, what work of ours can be produced as to be rewarded with so great a blessedness?

Use. That which we learn from this question of theirs, supposed to be conceived upon these grounds, is—

1. A humble sense of all that we do for God. The righteous remember not anything that they did worthy of Christ's notice; and we should be like-minded: Neh. 13:22, 'Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.' When we have done our best, we had need to be spared and forgiven rather than rewarded. On the contrary, Luke 18:11, 'The pharisee stood and prayed thus to himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' And those, Isa. 58:3, 'Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?' They challenge God for their work. None more apt to rest in their own righteousness than they that have the least cause. Formal duties do not discover weakness, and so men are apt to be puffed up; they search little, and so rest in some outward things. It is no great charge to maintain painted fire. The substantial duties of christianity, such as faith and repentance, imply self-humbling; but external things produce self-exalting. They put the soul to no stress. Laden boughs hang the head most; so are holy christians most humble. None labour so much as they do in working out their salvation; and none so sensible of their weaknesses and imperfections. Old wine puts the bottles in no danger, there is no strength and spirits left in it; so do formal duties little put the soul to it. On the other side, they are conscious to so many weaknesses as

serious duties will bring into the view of conscience, and have a deep sense of their obligations to the love and goodness of God, and a strong persuasion of the blessed reward. None are so humble as they: they see so much infirmity for the present, so much obligation from what is past, and such sure hope of what is to come, that they can scarce own a duty as a duty. None do duties with more care, and none are less mindful of what they have done. They discern little else in it, that they contribute anything to a good action, but the sin of it. This is to do God's work with an evangelical spirit; doing our utmost, and still ascribing all to our Mediator and blessed Redeemer.

2. What value and esteem we should have for Christ's servants and faithful worshippers. Christ treateth his mystical body with greater indulgence, love, and respect than he did his natural body; for he doth not dispense his judgment with respect to that, but these. He would not have us know him after the flesh, 2 Cor. 5:16; please ourselves with the conceit of what we would do to him if he were alive and here upon earth; but he will judge us according to the respect or disrespect we show to his members, even to the meanest among them; to wrong them is to wrong Christ: Zech. 2:8, 'He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.' The church's trouble goes near his heart, which in due time will be manifested upon the instruments thereof. To slight them is to slight Christ: 'He that despiseth you, despiseth me.' To grieve and offend them is to grieve and offend Christ: Mat. 18:10, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Did we but consider the value Christ puts upon the meanest christian, we would be loath to offend them. What comfort, love, kindness you show to them, it is reckoned by Christ as done to himself. If we would look upon things now as they shall be looked upon at the day of judgment, we would find our hands and tongues tied and bridled from injuring

Christ's faithful servants; yea, we would show more of a christian spirit in relieving their bodily and spiritual necessities, and doing good upon all occasions.

3. It teacheth us to take off our thoughts from things temporal to things eternal; both in judging of ourselves and others. The great miscarriage of the world is because they measure all things by sense and visible appearance: 'Now we are the sons of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be,' 1 John 3:2. Heirs in the world are bred up suitable to their birth and hopes, but God's sons and heirs make no fair show in the flesh.

[1.] Do not judge amiss of others. God's people are a poor, despised, hated, scorned company in the world as to visible appearance; and what proof of Christ is there in them? Who can see Christ in a hungry beggar? or the glorious Son of God in an imprisoned and scorned believer? or one beloved of God in him that is mortified with continual sicknesses and diseases? 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or sick, and in prison?' A pearl or a jewel that is fallen into the dirt, you cannot discern the worth of it till you wash it, and see it sparkle. A prince in disguise may be jostled and affronted. To a common eye things go better with the wicked than with the children of God. They enjoy little of the honour and pleasure and esteem of the world, and yet they are the 'excellent ones of the earth,' Ps. 16:3. If you can see anything of Christ in them, of the image of God in them, you will one day see them other manner of persons than now you see them, or they appear to be. These will be owned when others are disclaimed, and glorified when they are rejected and banished out of Christ's presence; and though your companying with them be a disgrace to you now, it will then be your greatest joy and comfort.

[2.] Do not judge amiss of yourselves. When the world doth not esteem of us, but is ready to put many injuries upon us, and to follow us with hatred and sundry persecutions, we are apt to judge ourselves forsaken of God; that we have no room or place in his heart, or else these things would not befall us. Oh, no! Christ may be imprisoned in his members, banished in his members, reduced to great straits and exigencies in his members; yea, by the hand of God you may be made poor and hungry and naked; but all this shall be recompensed to you. We must not walk by sense, but by faith, 2 Cor. 5:7. Time will come when they that wonder at our afflictions shall wonder at us for the glory that Christ will put upon us, when you and all the saints about you shall say, Little did I think that a poor, base, laborious, miserable life should have such a glorious end and close. Christians, wait but a little time, and you will have more cause to wonder at the glory that shall be revealed in you than at the afflictions you now endure.

Secondly, We now come to Christ's answer and reply to this question. Wherein—

1. Take notice of the note of averment and assurance, 'Verily I say unto you.' I do the rather observe it, because I find the like in a parallel place: Mat. 10:42, 'Verily I say unto you, He shall in nowise lose his reward.' This showeth that it is hardly believed in the world, but yet it is a certain truth.

2. The answer itself; wherein the former passages are explained of Christ's being hungry, thirsty, naked, exiled, imprisoned; the riddle is opened. What is done to the afflicted, Christ taketh it as if it were done to him in person.

In this answer observe—

[1.] The title that is put upon afflicted christians; they are his 'brethren.'

[2.] The extent and universality of this title; the meanest are not excepted, 'The least of these my brethren.' The meanest as well as the most excellent; the poor, the abject of the world, believing in Christ, are accounted his brethren.

[3.] The particular application of this title, to every one of them, 'To one of the least of my brethren.' We cannot do good to all; yet if we do good to one, or to as many as are within our reach or the compass of our ability, it shall not be unrewarded.

[4.] The interpretation of the kindness showed to these brethren, 'What you have done to the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.'

1. I shall first consider the force and importance of these expressions.

2. Their scope and intendment here, which is to bind us to acts of charity and relief to Christ's poorest servants.

First, For the force and importance of these expressions. And there, first, observe, that whoever believeth in Christ are accounted as his brethren and sisters, and he will not be ashamed to own them as such at the last day.

Here I shall show you—(1.) Who are brethren; (2.) What a privilege this is.

First, Who are brethren? Some by brethren understand mankind; and so, 'What you have done to the least of my brethren,' in their sense, is to the meanest man alive, partaker of that human nature which I have honoured by assuming it. But that is brethren in the

largest sense. No; that is not his meaning here. Upon what grounds charity is to be expressed to them I shall show you more fully by and by. To do good to a poor man, as to a poor man, is a work of natural mercy; but to do good to a poor man, as he is one of Christ's brethren, is a work of christian charity: 2 Peter 1:7, 'Add to brotherly kindness, charity.' Φιλadelphia and ἀγάπη, is distinguished. There is a more kindly and tender affection that we owe to those who are children of the same father, or are in charity bound to judge so, by sympathising with them in trouble, supplying their necessities, every way studying to promote their spiritual and temporal welfare. But a general love to all we must thirst after, and endeavour the true good of all, to whom we may be profitable. But the title of brethren to Christ groweth from faith, by which we are made the children of God: John 1:12, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' And therefore Christ calleth them brethren. And it is very notable to observe: Heb. 2:11, 'For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Mark, the kindred is only reckoned to the sanctified: though all mankind have the same nature, come of the same stock, yet 'He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' There the relation holdeth of both sides. Christ is born of a woman, and they are born of God, John 1:13; and so he is a kinsman doubly. *Ratione incarnationis suæ et regenerationis nostræ*, as Macarius. He taketh part of flesh and blood, partaketh of human nature; and we are made partakers of a divine nature, 2 Peter 1:4; and Mat. 12:47–50, 'Then one said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee: but he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren; for

whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'

Secondly, Now I shall show you, in the next place, what a privilege this is. I shall show you—

1. What condescension there is on Christ's part, that he should count the least of his people, not only for his own, but for his brethren. The apostle saith, 'He is not ashamed,' Heb. 2:11. We are said to be ashamed in two cases:—

[1.] When we do anything that is filthy. As long as we have the heart of a man, we cannot do anything that hath filthiness in it without shame. Or—

[2.] When we do anything beneath that dignity and rank which we sustain in the world. The former consideration is of no place here; the latter then must be considered. Those that bear any rank and port in the world are ashamed to be too familiar with their inferiors; yet such is the love of Christ towards his people, that though he be infinitely greater and more worthy than us, yet 'he is not ashamed to call us brethren.' It is said, Prov. 19:7, 'All the brethren of the poor do hate him.' If a man fall behind-hand in the world, his friends look askew upon him; but Jesus Christ, though he be the eternal Son of God, by whom he made the world, the splendour of his Father's glory, and the brightness of his person, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, and we be poor, vile, and unworthy creatures, yet he disdaineth not to call us brethren, notwithstanding our meanness and unworthiness, and his own glory and excellency. Divines observe that Christ never gave his disciples the title of brethren but after his resurrection; before, servants, little children, friends, were their usual designations; but then he expressly calleth them brethren: John 13:13, 14, 'Ye call me lord and master, for so I am;' and John

12:26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be.' Friends: John 15:15, 'I have called you friends.' But after the resurrection the style of brethren is very frequent: Mat. 28:10, 'Go tell my brethren, I go into Galilee;' and John 20:17, 'Go to my brethren, and tell them, I go to my Father, and your Father.' And at the last day he giveth this title to all the elect, that are put at his right hand.

Quest. But what is the reason of this?

Ans. Though the ground were laid in the incarnation, when Christ naturalised himself to us, and became one of our own line, yet he doth expressly own it after his resurrection, and will own it at his coming to judgment, to show that his glory and exaltation doth not diminish his affections towards his people, but rather the expressions thereof are enlarged. He still continueth our brother, and will do so as long as our nature remaineth in the unity of his person, which will be to all eternity.

2. That it is a real privilege to us; it is a title of great dearness and intimacy; it is not an idle compliment, for there is cause and reason for it, διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν. All mankind coming of one father, and being made of one blood, are brethren; and Christ reckoneth himself among us, and assumeth the relation proper to his nature, especially when we get a new kindred by grace. It is not an empty title, but a great and real privilege; not a nominal, titular relation, to put honour upon us, but to give us benefit, Rom. 8:17, and for the present assureth us of his tender respect.

Use 1. It comforts us against the sense of our own unworthiness. Though our nature be removed so many degrees of distance from God, and at that time polluted with sin, when Christ glorified it, and assumed it into his own person, yet all this hindered him not from

taking our nature, and the title depending thereupon. Therefore the sense of our unworthiness, when it is seriously laid to heart, should not hinder us from looking after the benefits we need, and which are in his power to bestow upon us. This term should revive us. Whatever serves to our comfort and glory, Christ will think it no disgrace to do it for us. This may be one reason why Christ biddeth them tell his brethren, 'I am risen,' Mat. 28:10. The poor disciples were greatly dejected and confounded in themselves; they had all forsaken him, and fled from him; Peter had denied him, and forsworn him; what could they look for from him but a sharp and harsh exprobration of their fear and cowardice? But he comforts them with this message, 'Go tell my disciples, and Peter, that I am risen.' The fallen man is not forgotten. Peter was weeping bitterly for his fault, but Christ sends him a comfortable message, 'Go tell Peter I am risen.'

Secondly, The next thing that I shall observe is—

Doct. That what is done to his people, to the least of them, Christ will esteem it as done to himself.

1. It holdeth true in injuries: Isa. 63:9, 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;' and Acts 9:4, 'And he fell to the earth, and he heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Christ was wronged when the saints were wronged. He is above passion, but not above compassion. The enemies of the church have not men for their enemies, but Christ himself. When they are mocked and scorned, Christ is mocked and scorned.

2. It holdeth also true of benefits. The least courtesy or act of kindness showed to them is showed to Christ; that which is done in Christ's name, and for Christ's sake, is done unto Christ. You do not

consider the man so much as Christ in him. The apostle saith they 'received him even as Christ Jesus,' Gal. 4:14; that is, in his name, and as his messenger, 2 Cor. 5:10; and Luke 10:16, 'He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me;' as a king is resisted in a constable armed with his authority. As when we go to God in Christ's name, whatever we obtain is put upon Christ's account (it is not for our merit, but Christ's), so whatsoever you do to any person in Christ's name, and for Christ's sake, is done to Christ. If you send another in your name, if he be denied, you take yourselves to be denied; if granted for your sake, you think it granted to you.

I come now to consider—

Secondly, The scope. These things are parabolically represented, to increase our faith concerning the reward of charity. The doctrine is this—

Doct. That one special end and use unto which rich men should employ their worldly wealth should be the help and relief of the poor. Consider—

1. In the general, it is not to the rich, but to the poor. Feasts and entertainments are usually for the rich; but Christ saith, Luke 14:12–14, 'When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, thy brethren, neither thy kinsman, nor thy neighbour; lest they bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the blind, the lame; and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' Many truck with their kindness; they make merchandise rather than impart their charity: this is not charity, but merchandise.

2. Of the poor there are three sorts:—

[1.] *Pauperes diaboli*, the devil's poor; such as have riotously spent their patrimonies and reduced themselves to rags and beggary by their own misgovernment. These are not wholly to be excluded when their necessity is extreme; you give it to the man, not to the sin: it may work upon them, especially when you join spiritual alms with temporal.

[2.] There are *pauperes mundi*, the world's poor; such as come of poor parents and live in poor estate; those are to be relieved: there is a common tie of nature between us and them: Isa. 58:7, 'Thou shalt not hide thyself from thine own flesh.'

[3.] There are *pauperes Christi*, Christ's poor; such as have suffered loss of goods for Christ's sake, or being otherwise poor, profess the gospel; these especially should be relieved: Rom. 12:13, 'Distributing to the necessities of the saints;' and Gal. 6:10, 'Let us do good to all, especially to the household of faith.' There is an order; first, our own families, our parents, our children or kindred, 1 Tim. 5:8; then strangers; and among them those that profess the same faith with us; and then them who do most evidence the reality of faith by a holy life; and then to all, as occasion is offered.

Reasons of this duty.

1. The near union that is between Christ and his people. Christ and believers are one and the same mystical body, with Christ their head: 1 Cor. 12:12, 'For, as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body; so is Christ.' Now that union compriseth all: 'When one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it,' ver. 26. There is a sympathy and fellow-feeling. When you tread upon the toe the tongue will cry

out, and say, You have hurt me. They cast themselves out of the body that have not common joys and common sorrows with the rest of the members.

2. Christ hath commended them to us as his proxies and deputies. He himself receiveth nothing from us; he is above our kindness, being exalted into the heavens; but in every age he leaveth some to try the respects of the world. Oh! what men would do for Christ if he were now in the flesh! It is a usual deceit of heart to betray our duties by our wishes. Now Christ hath put some in his place: 1 John 4:20, 'If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' We would be as much prejudiced against Christ as we are against the godly poor. That which your servant receiveth by your order, you receive it. He receiveth your respects by the hands of the poor; he hath devolved this right on the poor as his deputies: Mat. 26:11, 'For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always.' We pretend much love to Christ; if he were sick in a bed, we would visit him; if in prison, or in want, we would relieve him. What is done to one of these is done to him.

3. It is a great honour put upon us to be instruments of divine providence and preservation of others. You are God's substitutes in giving, as the poor in receiving. As gods to them, we relieve and comfort them. He could give to them without thee, but God will put the honour of the work upon thee. This is the greatest resemblance of God: Acts 20:35, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive;' that is, more God-like. It is a great mercy to be able and willing: Luke 6:36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.' The true advantage of wealth is in relieving and supporting others; nothing showeth our conformity to God so much as this. Christ saith not, If ye fast, ye shall be like your heavenly Father, or, If ye pray, or,

If ye prophesy, or, If ye be learned; but, 'If ye be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.' Thou holdest the place of God, and art as it were a god to them.

4. The profit of this duty. It seemeth a loss, but it is the most gainful trade in the world. It is the way to preserve your estates, to increase them, to cleanse them, to provide for eternal comfort in them.

[1.] To keep what you have. Your goods are best secured to you when they are deposited in God's hands; you provide 'bags that wax not old.' Many an estate hath been wasted for want of charity, James 5:2, 3.

[2.] To increase it, as seed in the ground. The husbandman getteth nothing by keeping the corn by him: 2 Cor. 9:6, 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully;' Deut. 15:10, 'When thou givest to thy poor brother, the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto.' All your works of mercy and liberality shall be abundantly repaid: Luke 6:36, 'Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.' But above all, Prov. 19:17, 'He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord; that which he hath given he shall pay him again.' If you would put out your money to the best advantage, lend it to the Lord; the interest shall be infinitely greater than the principal. What better security than God's? He is a sure paymaster, and he will pay them to the full, great increase for all that he borroweth, a hundred for one, which is a usury not yet heard of in the world. You can expect nothing from the poor sort; they have nothing to give you; but God is their surety, he that is the great possessor of heaven and earth, that never broke his word. Nay, we have his hand and seal to show for it; his bond is the scriptures, his seal the sacraments; therefore he will

pay you. But you will say, These are words. Venture a little and try: Mal. 3:10, 'Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord. Give, and it shall be given to you.' Whereas, on the contrary, if you forbear to give, God will forbear to bless; as the widow's oil, the more it run the more it increased, and the loaves were multiplied by the distribution. And then—

[3.] It cleanseth your estate; you will enjoy the remainder more comfortably. Wells are the sweeter for draining; so are riches, when used as the fuel of charity. There are terrible passages against rich men: 'How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.' There is no way to free ourselves from the snare but to be liberal and open-handed upon all occasions: Luke 11:41, 'Give alms, and all things shall be clean to you.'

[4.] You may possess an estate with a good conscience. It will not easily prove a snare. Nay, you shall have comfort of it for ever; you shall have treasure in heaven: Luke 12:13, 'Sell that you have and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.' Whatever shift you make, rather sell than want to give out disbursements in this life, and your payment shall be in the next.

Use is reproof, because there are so few true christians in the world. Many men have great estates, but they have not a heart to be helpful to their poor brethren and neighbours, are very backward and full of repinings when they give anything. They are liberal to their lusts, gaming, drinking, rioting, luxury, in lawsuits, and costly apparel. Do these men believe there is a heaven and hell, and a day of judgment?

For motives.

1. Thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Thou shalt not part with thy goods, so much as change them for those that are incomparably better. There is a reward for the liberal and open-handed. What is given to the poor is not cast away, but well bestowed. Now is the seed-time, the harvest is hereafter. The poor cannot requite thee; therefore God will: Luke 12:14, 'A cup of cold water, given in charity, shall not want its reward,' Mat. 10.

2. This reward is propounded to encourage us. Christ doth not only instruct us by commands, but allure us by promises. There is a dispute whether we may look to the reward. I say, we not only may, but must. Did we oftener think of treasure in heaven we would more easily forego present things.

3. The reward which we shall receive not only answereth the reward, but far exceeds it. It is called a treasure: 'The riches of glory,' Eph. 1:18; and so are far better than these transitory riches which we cannot long keep. Thou shalt have eternal riches, which shall never be lost. Our treasure in heaven is more precious and more certain, Mat. 6:19, 20.

4. This reward is not in this life, but in the life to come; treasure in heaven. What is it to be rich in this world? They are but uncertain riches: 1 Tim. 6:17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches; but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' Bracelets of copper and glass and little beads, and such like trifles, are valued by the rude barbarians, that are contemptible with us. The use and valuation of earthly things ceaseth in the world to come; it only holdeth on this side the grave. What we now lend to the Lord we must make it over, that we may receive it by exchange there.

5. It is a very pleasing thing to God: Acts 10:4, 'Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before the Lord.' They are a delight to God: Heb. 13:16, 'For with such sacrifices God is well pleased;' as the sweet incense that was offered with the sacrifice; not appeased, but well pleased. So Phil. 4:18, 'An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.'

SERMON VIII

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—MAT. 25:41.

I COME now to speak of hell. Startle not at the argument; we must curse as well as bless. See our gospel commission, Mark 16:16.

In this verse you have—(1.) The persons sentenced; (2.) The sentence itself.

First, The persons sentenced; in that title, or terrible compellation, ye cursed.

Secondly, The sentence itself; where we have—

1. *Pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, depart.
2. *Pœna sensus*, the pains, into fire.
3. The duration, everlasting.
4. The company and society, the devil and his angels.

I shall prosecute the text in this order:—

1. Show you that there are everlasting torments in hell, prepared for the wicked.
2. These torments shall be full at the day of judgment.
3. Concerning the persons sentenced; it shall light upon the cursed.
4. The nature of those torments; the loss of communion with God in Christ, and the horrible pain of fire; the duration, everlasting; and the company, the devil and his angels.

First, That there is a place of everlasting torments in hell, prepared for the wicked.

This being a truth hated by flesh and blood, ought the more strongly to be made evident to us. Now there is a hell, if God, or men, or devils may be judge.

1. Let God be the judge. He hath ever told the world of a hell, in the Old Testament and the New.

[1.] In the Old Testament, but sparingly, because immortality was reserved as a glorious discovery, fit for the times of the gospel: Deut. 32:22, 'A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell.' God's wrath is still represented by fire, which is an active instrument of destruction; and the seat and residence of it is in the lowest hell, in the other world. So Ps. 11:6, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, and fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest.' First snares, and then fire and brimstone. Here they are held with the cords of vanity, and hereafter in chains of darkness. Here they have their comforts, crosses, snares; then hell-fire for their portion. So Isa. 30:33, 'For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire, and much

wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.' Tophet is the same place which is called the valley of Hinnom and Gehenna in the New Testament; a filthy hateful place, which the Jews defiled with dead men's bones: 2 Kings 23:10, 'And he defiled Tophet, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. And he brake in pieces the image, and cut down the groves, and defiled their places with the bones of men.' Infants were burnt there, with horrible cries and screeches, and sound of drums and tabrets and other instruments, to drown the noise; and those that were condemned were burnt in that valley, as also the bones of malefactors. Now, to the piles of wood, and the piles continually burning there, doth the prophet allude. This was represented in Sodom's burning as a type, as the drowning of the world was a figure of Christ's coming to judgment: the burning of the sacrifice, which, in the interpretation of the law, was the sinner himself, was the figure of it.

[2.] Now come we to the New Testament. There are places without number. It is sometimes represented by fire, where we read of a furnace of fire: Mat. 13:42, 'And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' God's wrath is compared in the Old Testament to a fiery oven, where the contracted flame appeareth most dreadful. Sometimes to a lake of fire: Rev. 19:20, 'And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image; both these were cast into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.' At other times it is compared to a prison: 1 Peter 3:19, 'By which also he went and preached to the spirits that are in prison.' Or to a bottomless pit: Rev. 9:11, 'And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit.' There is darkness, and chains, and

gaoler, and judge; the chains of invincible providence, and their own horrible despair. There is no making an escape; but of this more hereafter. So that, unless we will count God a liar, there is such a place of torment provided.

2. Ask men. The blind nations had a sense of eternity, and fancies of a heaven and hell, Elysian fields, and obscure mansions, and places of torment. There are some relics of this truth in the corrupt doctrine of the Gentiles. But we need not go so far back as tradition: look to conscience. Wicked men find in themselves an apprehension of immortality and punishment after death: Rom. 1:32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Reason showeth that he that perfectly hateth sin will perfectly punish it; not in this life, for abominable sinners are many times prosperous: here justice is not discovered to the utmost, therefore guilty conscience presageth there is more evil to come. There is much in these presages of conscience, especially when we are more serious, however they dissemble the matter when well: Heb. 2:15, 'And deliver them from the fear of death, who all their lifetime were subject to bondage.' Yet, when they come to die, when they are entering upon the confines of eternity, then they cannot hide their fears any longer. Oh! the horrors and terrors of wicked men when they lie a dying! If ever men may be believed, it is then.

3. The devils are orthodox in this point for judges. There are no atheists in hell: Mat. 8:29, 'And behold they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come to torment us before the time?' They know there is a time when they shall be in greater torment than now they are. Therefore, if we will take God's word or authentic record for it, or man's word when he is not in a case to dissemble, or the devil's word, there is a hell, or everlasting torments prepared for the wicked.

Object. 1. But is it not an everlasting abode under death, and, to make it the more terrible to vulgar capacities, expressed by eternal fire?

Ans. This were to make Christ a deceiver indeed, and to publish his doctrine with a lie or a handsome fraud. But clearly—

1. There is a state of torment, as well as a state of death. It is true it is called the second death, because deprived of eternal life, which is the only true life; and because it is worse than the temporal death; better never have been born: Mat. 26:24, 'It had been good for that man that he had never been born.' He doth not say, It had been good, but, It had been good for that man. If only death and annihilation were in it, what sense would there be in this speech? Therefore there is a lively and effectual sense of the wrath of God. Besides, the consciences of wicked men do fear and presage other kind of punishment from God's wrath, or else why are they most troubled when they come to die? Why is it so dreadful a thing to fall into the hands of the living God? Heb. 10:31. We are mortal creatures, but God is a living God; why should the eternity of God make his wrath terrible, but that there is a fear of an eternal subsistence on our part also? We read of many and fewer stripes, Luke 12:47, 48; Mat. 11:22, 'It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.' If it be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you, torments are measured out by proportion, according to our sins, and means of grace that we have enjoyed but not improved.

2. There is a place of torment, a local hell, τόπον βασάνου: Luke 16:28, 'This place of torment.' And Judas went to his own place, Acts 1:25. As in all commonwealths, the prince hath not only his palace but his prison; it must be somewhere, for the wicked are somewhere: God keepeth it secret with wise counsel, because he will exercise our

faith, and not our sense: Job 38:17, 'Have the gates of death been opened to thee, or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?' This is one of the secrets of providence.

Object. 2. But how can it stand with God's love and mercy to punish his creature for ever? Our bowels are troubled if we should hear the howling of a dog in a fiery furnace for a small space of time. Now God is love itself, 1 John 4:8; therefore surely he will not damn his creature to everlasting torments.

Ans. Man is not fit to fix the bounds of God's mercy, but the Lord himself; therefore take these considerations:—

1. God's punishments may stand with his mercy. It is very notable, in one place it is said, Heb. 10:31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;' but in another place it is said, 2 Sam. 24:14, 'I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great.' The one noteth God angry, the other God appeased. When God hath been long upon a treaty of love, patience abused is turned into fury. The one showeth what God is in himself, love, sweetness, mercy; the other, what he is when provoked. The sea in itself is smooth and calm, but when the winds and tempests arise, how dreadfully it roareth. God's attributes must not be set quarrelling. He is love and mercy, but he is also just, and true, and holy. If he were not angry for sin, he should not love his justice, make good his truth, manifest his holiness, and so hate himself. If God should pardon all sins, his abhorrency and hatred of sin could not be manifested, and so he would lose the honour of his infinite holiness; therefore in men and angels he would declare his displeasure of it, and no less hatred of the sinner. God saw it best for his own glory to suffer some to sin, and by sin to come to punishment. Therefore do not wallow in thy filthiness, and think that God will be all honey, that

mercy will bear thee out. He hath said that liars and drunkards shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. If God is merciful, and yet did such things to Christ, certainly he may remain merciful much more, and yet punish thee.

2. God doth it to show his mercy to others; it was necessary for the whole world that God should inflict so severe a punishment. Punishments are not always for the emendation of the delinquent, but for the good of others. The howlings and groanings of the damned maketh the harmony and music of providence more entire, saith Gerson. It was a necessary provision for the good of the whole world, and meet for the beauty of providence, that God should have a prison as well as a palace. Besides, for the restraint of sin, there is more mercy in the restraint of sin, or the taking away of sin, than there would be in restraining the punishment; this is the great means to lessen corruption. Origen, that thought the punishment of hell should one day have an end, yet thought not good to suppress this doctrine, lest men should take liberty to sin. So Epicurus and Seneca, that looked upon it as a poetical fiction, thought it to be a fit invention. A temporal punishment would not have been enough to restrain men; men are obstinate in sin, and will endure any temporal inconveniences rather than part with their lusts: Micah 6, 'Rivers of oil, the first-born of their bodies for the sin of their souls;' and Baal's priests gashed themselves. It was the wisdom of God to find out such a remedy; so that we may say, that God could not have been so merciful if he had not appointed these everlasting torments. It was necessary they should be, for they are a good help to virtue; and to threaten, unless they were, will not stand with truth. Now which is the greater mercy? to take away punishments or sins? to lessen the miseries of mankind or their corruptions? Many have escaped hell by thinking of the torments of it.

3. The damned in hell cannot accuse God for want of mercy; it will be a part of their torment in hell to remember that God hath been gracious; conscience will be forced to acknowledge it, and to acquit God. Though they hate God and blaspheme him, yet they will remember the offers of grace, riches of goodness, and care of his providence: 'They will not see, but shall see,' Isa. 26:11. *Oculos quos oclclisit culpa, aperiet pœna.* As now when God bringeth carnal men under mercies, it is one of the greatest aggravations.

Object. 3. How can it stand with his justice to punish a temporary act with eternal torment or punishment?

Ans. 1. We are finite creatures, and so not fit judges of the nature of an offence against God; the lawgiver best knoweth the merit of sin, which is the transgression of the law. The majesty against which they sin is infinite; the authority of God is enough, and his will the highest reason. A jeweller best knoweth the price of a jewel, and an artist in a picture or sculpture can best judge of the errors of it.

2. With man, offences of a quick execution meet with a long punishment, and the continuance of the penalty in no case is to be measured with the continuance of the act of sin. *Scelus non temporis magnitudine, sed iniquitatis magnitudine metiendum est.* Because man sinneth as long as he can, he sinneth in *æterno suo* (as Aquinas), therefore he is punished in *æterno Dei*. We would live for ever to sin for ever, and because men despise an eternal happiness, therefore do they justly suffer eternal torment; and their obligations to God being infinite, their punishment ariseth according to the excess of their obligations.

Use 1. It informeth us of the evil of sin. God will never be reconciled to them that die in their sins, but for ever and for ever his bowels are shrunk up; though God be love itself, and delighteth in nothing so

much as in doing good to the creature, yet he doth not only turn away his face, but torment them for ever.

Use 2. It reproveth and convinceth—(1.) The atheist; and (2.) The carnal sensualist.

1. The atheist. These men are short-sighted; they cannot out-see time, and look beyond the grave. There is a hell; how will you escape it? Men think incredulity or unbelief is the best remedy against this fear. Do but consider, there is ten thousand to one, at least, against you. None more credulous than the atheist. If it prove true, in what a case are you? As sure as God is, this is true. It will do you no hurt to venture the safest way, upon probabilities, till we have further assurance. Take heed of indenting with God upon your own terms: Luke 16:31, 'They have Moses and the prophets; if they believe not them, neither will they be persuaded if one came from the dead.' We will give laws to heaven, have one come from the dead. God is not bound to make them see that wilfully shut their eyes, nor to alter the course of his providence for our sake.

2. The carnal sensualist; that is, the practical atheist, that put it off, because they cannot put it away, Amos 6:3. Many that know, themselves careless, wretched creatures, yet are not at all troubled about things to come. A star that is bigger than the earth yet seemeth to us to be but a spark, because of the great distance between them and us. The sensual man looketh upon all things of the other world to be at a distance. It may be nearer than they are aware of; their damnation sleepeth not; it lieth watching to take hold of them. God can easily put you into the suburbs of hell, as Belshazzar, Dan. 8:5, if you be negligent, and slip your time. You should labour to be found of him in peace. Now is the time of making peace with God; if not, 'Depart, ye cursed.' So is every man by nature. And such who were

never brought to a sense of the curse, and have not fled to Christ for refuge, Heb. 6:18, and are not at leisure to think of eternity, God's curse cleaveth to them.

Use 3. To chide us for our unbelief. The knowledge of these things swimmeth in the brains; we are guilty of incogitancy at least. This appeareth—

1. By our drowsiness, and weakness, and carelessness about the things of eternity. Did we believe that for every lie we told, or every one whom we deceived or slandered, we were forced to hold our hands in scalding lead for half an hour, how afraid would men be to commit an offence! Temporal things affect us more than eternal. Who would taste meat if he knew it were present death, or that it would cost him bitter gripes and torments? How cautious are we in eating or drinking anything in the stone or cholic or gout, where it is but probable it will do us hurt! We know certainly that sin hath death in it: 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom 6:23; yet we continue in sin.

2. By our backwardness to good works. Sins of omission will damn a man, as well as sins of commission, small as well as great. Christ saith not, Ye have robbed, but, Not fed, not clothed; not, Blasphemed, but, Not invoked the name of God; not that you have done hurt, but that you have done no good.

3. By our weakness in temptations and conflicts. We cannot deny a carnal pleasure, nor withstand a carnal fear, Mat. 10:28; shrink at the least pains in duty. The whole world promised for a reward cannot induce us to enter into a fiery furnace for half an hour; yet, for a momentary pleasure, we run the hazard of eternal torments.

4. By our carelessness in the matters of our peace. If a man were in danger of death every moment, he would not be quiet till he had got

a pardon. How can a man be quiet till he hath secured his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ? 'He that believeth not in Christ, the wrath of God abideth on him.'

SERMON IX

Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—MAT. 25:41.

I COME now to the second doctrine.

Doct. 2. That these torments shall be full at the day of judgment: 'Then shall he say,' &c.

First, There is something presupposed, that they begin presently after death. They are in hell as soon as the soul departeth out of the body; that is, as to the soul, as to the better half: Luke 16:22, 23, 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.' It is a parable, but sure Christ spake intelligibly, and according to the received doctrine of the church in those times. Mark how quick it followeth. Here he had his pleasures: ἀπέθανε δὲ καὶ ὁ πλούσιος, 'The rich man also died' (rich men die as well as others), 'and was buried;' it may be, had a pompous and stately funeral, when the soul is in hell. The body is left in the hands of death, but the soul is in a living and suffering condition. The souls of good men are in heaven: Heb. 12:24, 'Spirits of just men made perfect.' It would be uncomfortable for the saints to tarry out' of the arms of Christ so long as the last judgment, to be in a drowsy estate, wherein they neither enjoy God nor glorify him. And so the spirits of wicked men, they are in hell, ἐν φυλακῇ: 1 Peter 3:19,

'Who were sometimes disobedient, now in prison.' It would be some kind of comfort to the wicked to be so long delayed. The time is long till the last judgment, and we are not moved with things at a distance, what shall be thousands of years hence. It begetteth a greater awe when the danger is nigh. Oh! let this startle wicked men: before night they may be in hell, before the body be committed to the grave: the soul flitteth hence as soon as it departeth out of the body, to God that gave it, to receive woe or weal. The hour of death is sudden; many are surprised, and taken unawares. Your carnal companions (if God would use that dispensation), that sometimes bowsed and caroused with you, and wallowed in filthy excess, by this time know what it is to be in torments; they would fain come and tell you that you are as rotten fruit, ready to tumble into the pit of darkness. Every wicked man groweth upon the banks of eternity, and hangeth but by a slender string and root; one touch of God's providence, and they drop into hell.

Secondly, There is something expressed, to wit, that these torments shall receive their full and final accomplishment at the last day.

That their torments shall be increased appeareth—(1.) By comparison; (2.) By scripture; and (3.) By reason.

1. By comparing them—

[1.] With the devils: Jude 6, 'And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.' As good men are *ἰσαγγέλοι*, so wicked men are *δαίμονες*. The devils for the present are under the powerful wrath of God and horrible despair. Though they have a ministry and service in the world, yet they carry their own hell about with them; full of fears and tremblings under the wrath of God, but not in that extremity, discontented with their

present condition. Such a fall is much to a proud creature, and there is a despair of a better: Mat. 8:29, 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come to torment us before the time?' There is a bitter expectation of judgment to come. Now they have some delight in mischief, but at the last day their power shall be restrained, which is another infelicity of their nature. Their ignominy shall be manifested before all the world; they shall be dragged before Christ's tribunal, and judged by the saints, whom they hate, 1 Cor. 6:3. The good angels shall come as Christ's companions, the evil as his prisoners. These are sights that will work on their envy and thwart their pride, to see the glory of the saints and angels. *Dolet diabolus, quod ipsum et angelos ejus Christi servus, ille peccator judicaturus est*, saith Tertullian. Then they are confined to hell, there to keep their residence, where they shall have a more active sense of their own condition, and of the wrath of God that is upon them. So it is with wicked men; they have their hell now, but at the last day they shall be brought forth as trembling malefactors before the bar of Christ; all their privy wickedness shall be manifested before all the world, 2 Cor. 4:1, 2. However they may be honoured and esteemed now, either for their power or holiness, they shall then be put to public shame, driven out of his presence with ignominy and contempt, cast into hell to keep company with the devils, where their torments shall be most exquisite and painful.

[2.] Compare them with the saints. Heaven's joys shall then be full, so hell's torments. The full recompense of the righteous, and the full vengeance of the wicked keep time and pace. Christ cometh to fetch the saints to heaven in state, ἡμερὰ φανέρωσεως: Rom. 8:19, 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' Then it shall be seen what God will do for his children. They are clad in their best robes to set off Christ's triumph. So suitably the wicked's judgment is not yet full; upon the last day it

shall be increased. Christ sets himself a-work to show the power of his wrath, to clothe them with shame and contempt.

2. Scripture: 2 Thess. 1:7–9, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;' Heb. 10:27, 'There remaineth nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary;' and in many other places.

3. Reason. The body, which hath so long respite, then hath its share of misery; upon the reunion of the body and soul, they shall drink the dregs of God's wrath: The soul worketh on the body, and the body on the soul. As a heavy sad spirit weakens the body, and drieth up the marrow of the bones; and a sickly body maketh the soul sad and mopish, so when the soul is filled with anguish, and the body with pains, their torment must needs be greater, because they have had a great sense of the joys of the glorified saints; as that nobleman, 'Thine eyes shall see it, but thou shalt not taste of it.' It worketh upon their envy to see them glorified whom they have maligned and used despitefully; and it worketh upon their conscience; this they have lost by their own folly. As a prodigal that cometh by the houses and fields which he hath sold, and thinks, This was mine; it is a grating thought to think, This might have been mine. Partly because of judgment and sentence. Then the books are opened, and all their ways are discussed; they are ashamed, but God is cleared and vindicated. There is a worm as well as a fire. The fire signifieth God's wrath, the worm the gnawing of their own conscience. It is hard to say which tormenteth them most, the terribleness or the righteousness. To consider that God is righteous in all that we feel, and we ourselves

have been the causes of our own ruin, this is a cutting thought to the damned; it maketh them gnash their teeth, and though they hate God, they can discharge the anger upon none but themselves. Besides, their companions are gathered together, those that sinned by their enticement or example, which are as fuel to kindle the flames, bind them in bundles, and set fire on one another. Objects reviving guilt are very displeasing here when conscience flieth in the face, as when Amnon hated Tamar. They cannot look upon the devils, but they think of temptations; upon the damned, but either they read their own guilt by reflection (they are the same), or else it bringeth to mind their former example; they brought them to this place. Again, Christ's final sentence is past; and therefore wrath, εἰς τὸ τέλος, such wrath as they cannot have more, for he will no more deal with them.

Use 1. Observe how a sinner hasteneth to his own misery by steps and degrees. In this life we are adding sin to sin, and in the next God will be adding torment to torment. Here God beginneth with us: John 3:18, 'He that believeth not, is condemned already.' Do not say, It is a long time till the last judgment; the halter is about thy neck, and there needeth nothing but turning over the ladder. Men are not sensible of it till they come to die, then there is a hell in the conscience, a sip of the cup of wrath. The horrors of the dying wicked are the suburbs of hell; then yellings and howlings begin. At death the bond of the old covenant is put in suit, and at the separation the gaoler carrieth us away to prison; there the soul is detained in chains of darkness, in a fearful expectation of more judgment; 'I am horribly tormented in this flame.' But after Christ's coming to judgment we are plunged into the depth of hell, the whole man is overwhelmed with misery. Well, then, if you add drunkenness to thirst, God will add to your plagues, till wrath come upon you to the uttermost.

2. Observe the patience of God; he doth not take a full revenge of his creatures till the last day. The most miserable creatures are suffered to enjoy some degree of happiness, or rather, do not feel the whole misery at the first. In the most dreadful executions of God's justice you may read patience. God is patient to the fallen angels, though presently, upon their sin, they were cast down into hell, 2 Peter 2:5; but much more to sinning man: 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die,' was the sentence; yet the sentence is prorogued till the day of judgment. To those whom he hath a mind to destroy he is patient. The old world he bore with, first a hundred and twenty years, and then the rain was forty days in coming; and reprobates, ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ, Rom. 9:22, 'He endureth them with much long-suffering;' intermission of wrath in this life, and respite to the body till the great day. How doth God bear with a company of hell-hounds! He suffereth them to stand by, as a dog, while the bread of life is distributed to the children. To bear with his children is much, but to bear with his enemies, who seek not his favour, and are the worse because forborne, and do provoke him daily, and do not relent and acknowledge their offence, is much more; yet all this while God holdeth his hands. Admire his patience, but do not abuse it. We are apt so to do: Eccles. 8:11, 'Because sentence against an evil-doer is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.' Reprobates fare well for a time, live in plenty and ease, and therefore think hell but a dream and vain scarecrow. But take heed; that which is kept off is not taken away; and when you see wicked men endured, and not presently cut off, be not offended; 'their day is coming,' 1 Peter 2:9; they are but reserved. Justice shall break forth, though the cloud of mercy long overshadow it. Their doom was long since passed; God might strike them dead in an instant.

3. One judgment maketh way for another. Our anger is rash, and therefore cooleth by degrees; it is at the height at first: but it is not so with God; his heateth by degrees, and is worst at last. There are first snares, then chains of darkness, then a most active sense of the wrath and displeasure of God. Let no man please himself in that he suffers affliction in this world; these may be the beginnings of sorrow, miserable here and miserable hereafter. There are wicked poor and wicked rich; some have a double hell—here and hereafter too. Do not think death will be an ease: 'Son, in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things,' There are Lazaruses in hell as well as in Abraham's bosom.

4. Origen's charity was too large. Origen, and after him Gregory Nyssen and others, dreamed of κάρτασιον πῦρ, a flaming river through, which the wicked pass, and so be happy, and that so all are saved, even the devils themselves; abusing Rom. 5:18, and 1 Cor. 15:2. There is an increase of torments, but no decay; then it will be said, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'

Secondly, Let us now speak of the persons sentenced. Here is a double description of them:—

1. From their posture, 'On the left hand.'

2. Their quality, in that title and terrible compellation, 'Ye cursed.'

1. Their posture, 'On the left hand.' It noteth not only the more ignominious place, but hath respect to their choice. The right hand is more honourable among all nations; the innocent were to plead their cause on the right hand, the guilty at the left. But it hath respect to their own choice; they seek after left-hand mercies: Ps. 16:11, 'At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore;' eternity, that is at God's right hand. So Prov. 3:16, 'Length of days is in her right hand, and in her

left hand riches and honour.' At the last day wicked men have but their own choice. As Darius distinguished between his followers; some love Δαρεῖον, some δαρεῖαν; so in the world there is a distinction; some love the gift better than the giver, make a sinister choice, choose greatness, honour, worldly pleasures. A man may know his future estate by his present choice. Wisdom standeth inviting with both her hands full: 'In her right hand is length of days;' here is eternity of pleasure; all the world runneth to the left hand. Riches and honour look more lovely than length of days in a carnal eye. Which will you have? Here in the church you will say, Eternity by all means; but the course of your lives saith, Riches and honour; these take up your time, care, and thoughts.

2. Let us see the title or terrible compellation, 'Ye cursed;' not by men, but by God. Many are blessed of God that are cursed of men: Mat. 5:12, 'Blessed are ye when men shall curse you for righteousness' sake:' it is no boot to have the world's blessings; yet observe the difference, ver. 34, he saith, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father;' but he doth not say, Cursed of my Father. Partly because cursing is alienum opus, his strange work; it doth not come so freely and kindly as mercy. The blessing cometh of his own accord; without and before the merit of the creature; but not the curse, till we force it, and wrest it out of God's hands. Partly because Christ would pass his sentence in a convincing way; and therefore he doth not pitch damnation upon the decree and counsel of God, as he doth election. It is 'blessed of my Father;' his love is the only cause; but 'ye cursed.' It is good to observe the tenderness of the scripture when it speaketh of the execution of the decree of reprobation, that they may not cast the blame upon God: their damnation is not cast upon his decree, but their own deservings. You may see the like difference, Rom. 11:22, 'Endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.' But then, ver. 23, 'The vessels of mercy which he hath

aforehand prepared unto glory.' He endureth the one, but he fitteth and prepareth the other; he created them, and permitted them to fall in Adam, justly hardeneth them for refusing his will, but themselves prepare their own hell, by their natural corruption and voluntary depravation, following their lusts with greediness. Speaking of the elect, it is said he hath prepared; but of the reprobate, it is said he is fitted. The reprobates bring something of their own to further their destruction, pravity and naughtiness of their own; every man is the cause of the curse and eternal misery to himself, but God is the cause and author of the blessing: 'Thy destruction is of thyself, but in me is thy help found.' The elect have all from God; he prepareth them for heaven, and heaven for them, without any merit of theirs. The reprobate is not damned simply on God's pleasure, but their own desert; before he, would execute his decrees, there is an interposition of their sin and folly.

Object. But it is said, Rom. 9:11, 'Before the children had done either good or evil, it was said, Esau have I hated.' So that it seemeth that they are cursed and hated of God before any merit and desert of theirs. I answer—

There is a twofold hatred—(1.) Negative; (2.) Positive.

1. Negative hatred is *noluntas miserendi*; a purpose not to give grace, a nilling to give grace. And then—

2. There is a positive hatred, which is *voluntas puniendi et condemnandi*. In other terms there is *præterition* and *predamnation*. For the former, God hateth them, as he will not give grace, for he is not engaged; and it is a great mercy that when all are worthy of punishment, yet that he will choose some to life. And for the latter, punish and damn them he doth not till they deserve it by their own sins; therefore it stoppeth the mouths of them that blaspheme the

Holy One of Israel, as if he did create men for death and the pains of hell: Hosea 13:9, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.' They are compassed with a fire of their own kindling, Isa. 50:11. But it is time to return. Wicked men are cursed of God; and God's curse is wont to take place. It is no easy matter to get rid of it; the curse of the law sticketh to them at the last day, and shall eternally. He doth not say, Be ye cursed; but, Go, ye cursed. They were cursed before they came to the tribunal of Christ. Those that are condemned to hell are such as remain under the curse of the law. And who are they? Final unbelievers.

[1.] Every man by nature is under the curse; for till we are in Christ we are under Adam's covenant; and Adam's covenant can yield no blessing to the fallen creatures: Gal. 3:10, 'As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.' The law requireth perfect, perpetual, and personal obedience. God did disannul the covenant made with Adam presently upon the fall; but the curses stand in full force against those that have not changed state, but are only children of Adam; and wicked men will find it so at the day of judgment, for they shall have judgment without mercy, whereas others are judged by the law of liberty, James 2:12, 13. It is clear everywhere there are but two states; either we are under the law or under grace. Hear what the law saith. An innocent nature, that is presupposed; and the person must continue in this perfect obedience. But we have continued in the violation of all things contained in the law. No action without a stain. If God should call us to a punctual account for the most inoffensive day that ever we spent, who could stand before him? Better we had never been born than to stand liable to that judgment, as all natural men do.

[2.] There is no way of escape but in closing with Christ by faith. The apostle supposeth the objection, Gal. 3:13. The curse of the law cleaveth to all Adam's posterity; therefore we must have interest in another, who keepeth up the curse of the law: John 3:36, 'He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.' The curse is not taken off; nay, when Christ is tendered, and finally refused, it is set on the closer; then we are condemned by the law, and condemned by the gospel too: John 3:18, 'Condemned already;' cast in law. But what hath he done to the remedy? ver. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.' Not accepting Christ offered is the great condemning sin. There remaineth no more sacrifice; we cannot expect another way after refusing that: Heb. 10:26, 'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.' The condemnation of the gospel can never be remitted. The curses of the law are ratified for our abuse of mercy; so that, in some sense, better we never had heard of Christ.

Use 1. Is for examination; how is it with you?

1. Every man by nature is in a cursed condition, Eph. 2:3, liable to Adam's forfeiture and breach. Were you ever changed? Until we change copies, we are still miserable. And—

2. There is no way to avoid this curse but in closing with Christ. In the sense of it fly to Christ for refuge. There is the law driving, and the gospel drawing. Christ is the only remedy the gospel showeth, and so pulleth in the heart to God; and we are undone without that. The law showeth it, and so we are driven out of ourselves: Heb. 6:18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Fly as if the avenger of blood were at your heels. Phil. 3:9: Do you labour to be found in Christ? When the flood was upon earth, none

were saved but they that got into the ark. So Cant. 2:3, 'I sat under his shadow with great delight.' It supposeth the scorching of the sun in those hot countries. Canst thou find thy heart driven? Thou art afraid thou shalt not get soon enough; that God will leave his suit, or thou shalt be called out of the world before the match be made up. Dost thou find thine heart fastening upon Christ? I will pitch here, as Joab took hold of the horns of the altar.

3. Besides the sense of the benefit that we have by Christ, there must be an unfeigned love to him, or else the curse doth still remain: 1 Cor. 16:22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha, accursed till the Lord come;' and that is for ever and ever. Can a man think he shall be the better for Christ when he esteemeth him as dung and trash, hath no delight in him, no value for him? We esteem men either as they are excellent in themselves, or as they are profitable to us. There is both in Christ. Therefore, if you love him not, it is a sign you have had no benefit by him. Gospel love, it is a love of gratitude; it ariseth from faith, Gal. 5:6.

4. This love must be expressed by a sincere obedience: 1 John 5:3, 'His commandments are not grievous.' It is not grievous for Christ's sake. The devil, though he be a proud spirit, careth not for dispraises, nor Christ for empty profession. Can any man esteem Christ that cannot forbear one pleasure for God, one vanity for his sake? By this you shall know whether you shall do well or ill, yea or no. Is it a pleasure to you to renounce your interests, to deny lusts, to perform duties for Christ's sake?

Use 2. Is to press us to come out of the curse of nature.

1. Be sensible of it. Consider—

[1.] God's curse is very dreadful: Dei benedicere est benefacere. The 'curse causeless shall not come;' but God's curse is sure to take place. Micah was afraid of his mother's curse, that he dareth not keep the money; yet we will keep our sins, Judges 17:2. It was money dedicated to make a graven image; a senseless curse, that was pronounced at random; but he thought it a dreadful thing to lie under a mother's curse, and therefore is not quiet till she had recalled it. Elisha cursed when he was mocked, and it took effect: 2 Kings 2:24, 'And he turned back and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord; and there came two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty-two children of them in pieces.' A prophet's curse is a dreadful thing. And will God put up all the affronts we put upon him, when we do despite to his Spirit and scorn his grace? This was but a man, these but children; yet when they scorned his ministry and function, as being bred up in idolatry; God will tear in pieces, and none to deliver. Take notice of God's curse on Cain: Gen. 3:11, 'Now thou art cursed from the earth.' He was the first-fruits of the reprobate, the patriarch of unbelievers, as Tertullian calleth him; the first cursed man in the world; and his curse was to be cast out of God's presence, ver. 14; a figure of what shall be done at the last day. It stuck close to him all his life; yea, cursed Cain was sensible of it: 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.' We are cursed again and again, Deut. 27. To every curse of the law they were to say Amen, to show the sure accomplishment of it. So certainly it will be; it is just as certain: it is a subscription to the justice of it, and a profession of their faith. Am I a cursed creature by nature? Are all his curses Yea and Amen, as well as his promises? Oh! what will become of me if I do not take hold of Christ? So the curse on the builder of Jericho is remarkable: Josh. 10:6, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord that raiseth up and buildeth this city; for he shall lay the foundation of it in his first-born, and in his younger son he shall build it up.' And you shall see, 1 Kings 16:34, some hundred of years afterwards was this

curse executed: 'Cursed is every one.' Yet the sinner blesseth himself, and smileth in his heart, and thinketh none of this shall come upon him; but after many years it breaketh out.

[2.] We know not how soon God may take the advantage of this curse, and cut us off from the possibility of his grace. Christ cometh as a thief, and stealeth upon men ere they are aware. We are indebted to God's justice, and we know not how soon God may put the bond in suit. Other debts have a day set for payment: God may demand it before to-morrow: Gen. 4:17, 'Sin lieth at the door,' like a sergent, to surprise us every hour; and then we go to prison, and remain there till we have paid every farthing, Luke 12. Solomon wisheth a man to hasten out of debt as a 'bird out of the hand of the fowler,' Prov. 6:5. A condemned malefactor, that is only reprieved during the pleasure of the prince, is in danger of execution every hour. Wrath breaketh out of a sudden. What provision have you made? How stand matters between God and you? If a man were informed that his servants had a plot to take away his life, to carry away his treasure, which is speedily to be put in execution, he would not be quiet till he had rid his hands of them: so is sin.

[3.] At the last day this curse is ratified by Christ's sentence: 'Go, ye cursed;' depart, ye cursed creatures. When others are acquitted by proclamation, as at the day of judgment, we receive our solemn discharge, Acts 3:19; then your curse is revived before all the world, and as cursed creatures you lose all pity from God, men, and angels. As Adam was driven out of paradise with a bitter taunt, Gen. 3:22, so with a terrible bann and proscription, that shall never be reversed.

[4.] It shall be presently executed: Esther 7:8, 'As soon as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.' These are considerations to beget a feeling of wrath.

2. Flee from it to Christ. Poor sinners, they stand in continual fear of execution. Oh! fly to Christ, to get the sentence reversed.

For motives to persuade us to come to Christ for help:—

[1.] Consider how willing mercy is to receive those that fly from the curse. This was God's design in shutting us up under the curse, that there might be no other way of escape: Rom. 3:19, 'That every mouth might be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God;' that we may become obnoxious, that we may acknowledge ourselves to be quite undone. So Gal. 3:23, 'The scripture hath concluded all under sin;' and Rom. 11:32, 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief.' The law, in the name of God, arrests us, accuses us, convinceth us, leaving us dead (all preparations to damnation), that through the prison doors we may beg for mercy. He alloweth an appeal from court to court.

[2.] With what honour to himself God may show us mercy. It is no wrong to appeal from the law to the gospel: Gal. 3:13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Christ hath taken the curse into his own person: Ps. 69:4, 'I restored that which I took not away;' that honour to God which he took not away.

[3.] The great offence in refusing Christ, Heb. 12:15. Esau was called a profane person, because he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. He was no drunkard, no swearer. To refuse the Father's riches of wisdom and grace, the Son's self-denial and sufferings, is the greatest ingratitude that can be. When all the labours and wooings of the Spirit are in vain, it is the greatest spite we can do to God; it is the greatest profaneness to set light by holy things, especially this great mystery, when we do not think it worthy our care and thoughts, Mat. 22:5.

SERMON X

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—MAT. 25:41.

Now we come to the sentence itself. There we shall first take notice of the *pœna damni*, the loss, depart.

The point is—

Doct. This is the hell of hells, that the reprobates must all depart, or lose the fruition of God in Christ.

But before I begin to set forth this part of the punishment, let me observe something:—

1. In this part of the torment all are equal. There are degrees elsewhere, but here the reprobates are all equally excluded. Christ will thus profess, Mat. 7:23, 'Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; I know you not.'

2. It is the greatest part of the punishment. The punishment of sense is finite in nature, though infinite in duration. Though it be from the wrath of God, it is still according to the capacity of the creature. But *pœna damni* is the privation of an infinite good. It is indeed a question which is the greater punishment, whether everlasting separation from God or everlasting torment? whether 'depart,' or 'everlasting fire'? According to the present state, pain is more sensible than loss. In the bodily state we judge altogether by the senses; but in the other world, when all objects are taken away, and there is a ceasing of temptations, and our judgments are mostly spiritual, there it is otherwise. The greatness of the punishment will appear:—

First, By the loss; they shall lose all heaven's joys, the favourable presence of God, the sight of Christ, the company of the blessed, and their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ's Father's house.

1. The favourable presence of God. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the sunshine of God's presence never cometh. God is summum bonum, the chiefest good; and in the other world, omne bonum, all in all. All things are immediate from God, comforts and punishments: Ps. 16:11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' Paul's departure, how grievous was it, when he said, 'Ye shall see my face no more!' Acts 19:28. Better lose all things than God: Exod. 33:15, 'If thy presence go not up with us, carry us not hence.' The appearance of the Son of God to the three children cast into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, how comfortable was it to them!

Object. Ay! but this is not to be presupposed of the damned. Is it any grief to the wicked to want God, against whom they have such an extreme averseness and hatred? I answer—

(1.) They are sensible of the loss of happiness; their judgments are changed, though not renewed. Fogs of error, atheism, and unbelief then vanish, and they are convinced by experience. There are no atheists in hell; they learn to prize happiness by bitter experience. As rational creatures, they cannot but be sensible of their loss, that know the worth of what is lost; and so great a blessedness lost cannot but breed sadness and dejection of spirit. They look on God not as lovely in himself, but as one that might be profitable to them. *Oculos quos occlusit culpa, aperiet pœna.*

(2.) It would lessen their torments if their understandings might be taken away. By sad experience they know what it is to want God,

though still their hatred of God remaineth. Heaven, that I am shut out of, is a blessing which others enjoy; Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom.

2. The sight of Christ. They had a glimpse before they went into hell of the glory of his presence: 2 Thes. 1:9, 'They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.' That short experience of Christ's appearing will remain in their minds; to all eternity it will stick by them, how they are thrust out. Christ himself, that hath the keys of death and hell, shall bid them go; as if he had said, I cannot endure your presence any longer.

3. From the company of the blessed: Luke 13:28, 'Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves shut out.' Envy is a part of their torment as well as their loss: Luke 16:27, 'And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.' It is a torment to think that others of the same nature and interest do enjoy what they have forfeited.

4. Their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ's Father's house: Rev. 22:14, 15, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'

Secondly, This loss is the more bitter and grievous because it is a loss of their own procuring. Forsaking of God was their sin, and now their misery. They first excommunicated God for a trifle: Job 22:7, 'Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of God.' Man is like the devil: 'Art thou come to torment us before our time?' Rom. 1:28, 'They did not like to retain God in their knowledge; therefore, God gave them

over to a reprobate mind.' They abhorred the thoughts of God; it was their burthen: 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Now they are filled with their own thoughts. Man was first a fugitive before he was an exile.

Thirdly, The loss is irreparable. Despair is a constant ingredient to their sorrow. They cannot hope ever to be admitted into God's presence any more. There are many ups and downs in a christian's experience. God hideth his face that he may show it afterwards the more gloriously. This is a curse that shall never be reversed. It was the church's prayer, 'Return again, and cause the light of thy countenance to shine on us, and we shall be saved,' Ps. 80:19; like the sunshine after a cloudy night. But here are fogs of darkness for evermore. The sun is to shine no more on them to all eternity: 2 Peter 2:17, 'To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.' Hell is a region upon which the sun shall never shine.

Use 1. Lay to heart your distance from God by nature. Let us not draw this great judgment upon ourselves. Our sin will be our torment. We are estranged from the womb, Isa. 58:3. As a stream runneth away from the fountain further and further, so are we absent from God both in heart and affections as well as in state: Eph. 2:13, 'Ye were afar off;' as the prodigal went into a far country. Thoughts of God are not only strangers, but unwelcome guests. 'The devils believe and tremble;' so we. Guilt will not suffer us to look God in the face, Ps. 10:4.

2. Be not quiet till you come out of this estate by Christ; he is the bridge between earth and heaven, John 14:6. There can be no familiarity between us and God, but through him, Luke 16:26. Christ is the ladder by which we ascend, the means of intercourse between God and us. When man was driven out of paradise, the tree of life

was guarded by a flaming sword. There is no coming to God but by him, and 'he is able to save to the utmost,' Heb. 7:25.

3. Avoid sin, that separateth between God and you, Isa. 59:1, 2. How will you pray when you cannot look God in the face? Fear followeth guilt. The Israelites, when they had sinned, worshipped at their tent-door. You cannot come to God with such confidence.

4. Let us often delight in communion with God and acquaintance with him. It is heaven begun. Heaven is for God's familiars. Strangers here will not be owned; and hereafter (Mat. 7:23) Christ will say unto them, 'I know you not.' But Christ will take notice of his old friends. Oh! then, love his presence, make him of your counsel, your bosom friend.

5. Live in a holy sensibleness of his accesses and recesses; for his accesses, that you may be thankful; for his recesses, to be humble. It is a question which is worst, not to take notice of his accesses or recesses, not to mourn for his absence or rejoice in his presence; both are bad. Not to mourn for his absence is the worst sin, because absence is most sensible. In the present life, when our enjoyment of him is lost, it is a temporary hell; yet it is foul ingratitude not to take notice of his presence, when he counselleth you in doubts, guideth you in straits. God will have his acts of familiarity to be observed; it is his complaint, Hosea 11:3, 'I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.' The one argueth little feeling, the other little gratitude; only want of feeling is the worsen sign, for that is a sign of deadness. When God suspends all acts of familiarity, some are stupid and insensible, so they can take up with the comforts of the creature; they never mind spiritual visits. Micah mourned for his gods. Love is discovered by grief in want, as well as delight in enjoyment. The main of christianity lieth

in observing how it is between us and God. When actual influences are suspended, either of grace or comfort, when prayer finds not such an answer, and when we do not find such excitation to holy duties, and God hideth himself from our prayers.

We have handled the loss. Now we come, secondly, to speak of the pain. There are sad gripes at the parting of the soul and body; what then will there be at the parting of the soul and Christ, when the terror of Christ's face shall banish them out of his presence?

Secondly, The *pœna sensus*. Here I shall take notice of—

1. The nature of the torment, fire.
2. The aggravation from the duration, everlasting.
3. The company and society, prepared, for the devil and his angels.

The nature of the torment, 'fire.' By fire is not meant material or ordinary fire; that cannot hurt spirits. Now this is such, a fire as is prepared for the devil and his angels. All the other expressions are metaphorical, the wood, the brimstone, the lake, the smoke, the worm, the chains; and why not this? But observe, though it be not fire, yet it noteth real and horrible torments, such, as are more painful than fire. It is called 'wrath to come,' 1 Thes. 1:10, because there was never such wrath before. The Holy Ghost useth such expressions as we are acquainted with.

1. The extremity of these pains cannot be told us. Fire is an active, furious element, the pain most searching, and no fire more scalding than brimstone; to sense that is most grievous and bitter. But the pains of hell surpass all that is spoken. Look, as when heaven is set

out by gold and pearls and precious stones—the joys there are much above these shadows—so all notions come short of hell.

2. The whole man is under the pains of it, both, body and soul; both are fellows in sin, and both are punished. It appeareth partly from scripture: Mat. 10:28, 'Fear not him that can kill the body, but fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell.' Mark, not only the soul, but the body. The body is not only the instrument, but the occasion of many sins; the law in the members, brutish motions of lusts; the eye is fed with lust; therefore the body hath its share.

[1.] For the body; what the torment shall be we cannot tell; the scripture is silent; only, in the general, that it shall have its share of punishment, is certain; and not only by the grief and anguish of the soul, but the pain residing in the body. As the saints have not only a happiness for their souls, but their bodies; their vile bodies shall be changed. At the day of judgment, when their bodies are united to their souls, their torments are increased. Here in the text it is said, 'Depart ye;' the whole man, no part free. There is a place of torment, as we proved before, as well as a state of torment; therefore the body hath its inconveniences: their eyes meet with nothing but affrighting spectacles, the devils and the damned. Every time they look on their tempter, it revives their guilt; as the saints, when they look on their Redeemer, it filleth their hearts full of love and adoration. What see they but devils to torture them, or other damned tormented with them? Wives and children through their negligence, or neighbours by their cursed example, brought into this place of torment. Their ears are filled with nothing but yellings and howlings, and hidcous outcries. More particularly I shall not define.

[2.] For the soul; the soul's evils arise from a lively and effectual sense of the wrath of God, and the gnawings of conscience. There is a

fire and a worm, Mark 9:44, the wrath of God and the horrors of conscience. There is an allusion to the worms that breed in dead bodies, and the fire wherewith they were burned.

First, Let us speak a little of the worm that breedeth. The worm of conscience consisteth in three things. There is—(1.) *Memoria præteritorum*; (2.) *Sensus præsentium*; (3.) *Metus fulurorum*. All the periods and distinctions of time yield matter of sorrow and anguish to them, past, present, and to come.

1. Conscience worketh on what is past, the remembrance of their former enjoyments. *Miserum est dixisse, fuisse beatos*. It is the miserablest thing that can be to outlive our happiness; to think of what we once enjoyed, but now want: Luke 16:25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedest thy good things.' Thy day is past, now no more pleasures, now all thy carnal delights are spent. The riches of God's goodness that I despised, I shall enjoy no more. The reflection on past comforts: I was thus and thus, but where hath sin brought me! The very remembrance will aggravate their present misery, especially when the memory shall be quickened by conscience to consider their ingratitude; their carnal confidence, how they neglected God in the abundance of all things, and nothing remaineth but the sin of their comforts and the curse. Where now are all your stately houses, pleasant gardens, costly tables, furnished with delicious meats? your gorgeous and pompous apparel, your merry meetings? These things I have enjoyed, but now they are come to their full and final period.

2. The time wasted; this is a commodity never valued till it be lost, and then it cannot be recovered. In hell they see the folly of it; the misspense of time is a killing circumstance. Experience maketh us value time. The horrors of the damned may be guessed at by the

complaints of the dying. Oh! for a little time! If they had but one year, one month more. Here men are prodigal of nothing so much as time, as if they had more than they could tell what to do with; but when they come to die, Oh! if God would spare them a little longer!

3. Especially opportunities of grace slighted. God reckoneth to a day, how long, how often, he hath warned them: Luke 13:7, 'These three years came I seeking fruit from this fig-tree, but behold I find none; cut it down.' Here is Christ's righteous expectation, 'These three years came I seeking fruit;' their ungrateful frustration, 'But I find none;' and then his final denunciation, 'Cut it down.' Whenever God reckoneth with a people, he reckoneth with them for time and opportunities of grace. Did not I warn you? What means we have had, and offers of grace, God's drawing nigh to us in an acceptable time! Every sermon will sting our conscience. There was a fair advantage; it is good to feel the worm while it may be killed, to take notice of checks of conscience for the present, and the motions of God's Spirit; this is a spark that will not be quenched.

4. The folly of their own choice. Men will not see now, but they shall see: Isa. 26:11, 'Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed.' Their understandings are cleared to know the worth of things, and their eyes opened, when it is too late: Jer. 17:11, 'At his latter end he shall be a fool.' He was a fool all his lifetime to neglect God for a trifle, but now he is a fool in the judgment of his own heart. If I had been as active for God as for my lusts, it would have been otherwise with me. Temptations are gone, lusts are gone: 'The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof.' There is no relish of pleasures in hell, if they could have them; they have now the bitter experience of the cost they have been at, therefore sadly reflect upon their folly. Conviction heightens their torment: Jer. 2:17-19, 'Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou

hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and a bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.' This is your way in the valley; as when children burn, and feel the gripes of a disease, we upbraid them, This is your eating of raw fruit. Experience maketh them feel the smart of it.

2. There is the sense of their present pain. Here, when we are corrected, we are senseless, like stocks and stones; but there must needs be feeling, because there is nothing to mitigate their torment, no carnal comforts wherein to steep conscience, no carnal companions that can be a comfort to us: the more we look upon them, the more we see our own sorrow by reflection. There is nothing left but indignation and impatience, and gnawing their tongues because of their anguish. Their discontent is part of their torment.

3. For the future, their condition is hopeless. If there could be hope in hell, the punishment would be the better borne; but 'there remaineth nothing but a fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of God,' Heb. 10:27. And it is a living God, who liveth for ever and ever, that is their enemy. Oh! who can think of it without astonishment? When they have run through thousands of years they still expect more. It is tedious to think of a short fit of pain of the stone or gout; but that is for ever. They endure all at once by thinking of what is to come.

Again, there is the fire, or an active sense of the wrath of God. Consider the greatness of it in these circumstances:—

1. God hath an immediate hand in the sufferings of the wicked: Heb. 10:33, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' The wicked fall immediately into his hands; the quarrel is his own, therefore he will take revenge by his immediate power. No creature is strong enough to convey all his wrath, as a bucket cannot contain an ocean. Man's anger is like himself, weak and finite, but God's is infinite: Ps. 90:11, 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?' Surely we do not consider what it is to fall into God's hands.

2. God sets himself a-work to see what he can do, and what a creature can bear. The capacity of the creature is enlarged to the utmost: Rom. 9:22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?' His justice decreeth it, his wisdom designeth it, and his power executeth it. He falleth upon us as an enemy to the utmost; with one hand he upholdeth the creature, and with the other punisheth it. Here he showeth what a creature can do when armed by him, hereafter what he can do himself: Ps. 78:39, 'For he remembered they were but flesh; he did not stir up all his wrath.' It doth not break out in its full weight and force.

3. Consider some instances of God's wrath: 'When his anger is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him,' Ps. 2:12. In corrective discipline, when God's children fall into any disease, the burnings of a fever, the gripes of the cholic, the torment of the stone, they cannot endure two or three days' pain; how wilt thou dwell with devouring burnings? These are nothing to the sharp punishments of hell on the body. Poor creatures are at their wits' end when but a spark or flash of this fire lighteth into the conscience. Judas hanged himself, Job cursed the day of his birth; yet this is but a drop; these come from hell, they have been in the suburbs of it. Dives wished that Lazarus might but dip the tip of his finger in water

to cool his tongue; these are warnings, they can tell you what a dreadful thing it is. The Lord Christ, who was the Son of God, perfect in faith and patience, he wanted no courage, he was under no despair in the midst of his agonies, yet he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Oh! what will become of them whose portion it is? Thus for the nature.

Secondly, The duration, everlasting fire. The pains of hell are eternal.

1. The moral reasons of it are—

[1.] Partly because our obligations to God are infinite. In a way of love, God hath done as much as he could. We turn the back upon eternal happiness which was offered in the gospel. They can never restore the honour to God which they have deprived him of, therefore their punishment is for evermore: the justice of God can never be satisfied by a finite creature. Believers do it in Christ, but the wicked are in their final estate.

[2.] They still remain impenitent; the damned are not changed in hell. Melted metal groweth hard again: the bad thief, that had one foot in hell, dieth blaspheming; their judgments are changed, but not their hearts. If one should come from the dead, he might speak to you of eternity, and that in hell they suffer eternal punishments.

2. The natural reasons are—

[1.] The fire continueth for ever, Heb. 10:33; the breath of the Lord still keepeth the flame burning; the fuel continueth for ever, and wicked men continue for ever; they consume not, but are immortal in body and soul. Oh! think of this! there is no end, no intermission. No end; the fire on Sodom lasted but a day; but when the wicked have lain in hell a thousand years, it is but as the first day. When a man is

sick, he tumbleth and tosseth, and telleth the hours of the night, and wisheth it were day. We are wont to think a sermon long, a prayer long; what will hell be? Conscience will ever be talking to thee, repeating over the story of thy life, and putting thee in remembrance of the wrath of God that endureth for ever. And—

[2.] It is without intermission: Rev. 20:10, 'They shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.' Not a drop to cool their tongues. Here sin is everlasting; all day it runneth in the mind, and all night it playeth in the fancy. Wicked men begin the morning with it, and end the day with it. Man is ever haunted with his own horrors, and the wrath of God inflicted upon him.

Thirdly, The next aggravation is, it is 'prepared for the devil and his angels;' for them principally, and others to bear them company: Satan, and all that are seduced by him, are tormented together. There is a principality among the devils, one that was chief and ringleader in the rebellion against God, he and his angels; and then wicked men make up the company in that region of darkness. It was a sad judgment on Nebuchadnezzar when he was turned out among the beasts; but the cursed of the Lord are turned out among devils. If a man knew a house were haunted, he would not lie in it for a night. You must keep company with Satan and his angels for evermore. The saints enjoy God, and have the company of good angels; but you must dwell with devils. If the devil should appear to thee in some terrible shape, would not thy heart fail thee? Thou canst not look upon any in hell but thou must remember enemies to thy soul as well as to God.

Use 1. This should make us consider the folly of sinners, that will run this hazard for a little temporal satisfaction; for as he cried out, 'For how short a pleasure have I lost a kingdom!' when he had parted

with his sovereignty for a draught of water; so you, out of a desire of present contentment, forfeit heaven, and run the hazard of eternal torments. When thou art about to sin, think of this. We need all kind of helps.

1. To stir us up to godliness. If men were as they should be, sweet arguments would be enough; but now we need the scourge. It is good to counterbalance any temptation, when it is violent. My heart will call me fool to all eternity. Can I dwell with everlasting burnings?

2. To rouse us up to the consideration of our natural misery.

[1.] Partly that we may 'flee from the wrath to come,' Mat. 3:7. There is no way but by Jesus Christ. We need every day to look back. In their flight to Zoar they were not to look back upon Sodom, lest there should be relentings kindled. But it is good to look back in this sense; we shall see nothing but fire and brimstone behind us.

[2.] That we may be thankful to Christ: 1 Thes. 1:10, 'Even Jesus, which hath delivered us from wrath to come.' He was substituted in our room and place; he suffered a kind of hell in his own soul, or else this must have been our portion.

Use 2. Are we of the number? There is a catalogue of the damned crew: Rev. 21:8, 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorceres, and idolaters, and all liars, have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.' The fearful; such as, for the fear of men, swerve from the holy profession and practice of godliness. The unbelieving; all that remain in an impenitent estate. Abominable, murderers, whoremongers; impure gnostics, such as ranters: 1 Cor. 6:9, 'Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor

covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' Is there any likelihood of deceit there. Corrupt nature is always devising one shift or another wherein to harden conscience. Idolaters; it is dangerous not to be right in worship. The covetous cometh in, Gal. 5:5, 'Nor covetous man, who is an idolater: let no man deceive you; for because of these things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.' We think it a small matter. All liars; not only the gross liar, but the heretic; as heresy is called a lie: it is good to keep to the pattern of sound words. The hypocrite's hell is his portion: Mat. 24:51, 'Appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Hypocrisy, it is a practical lie.

SERMON XI

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.—MAT. 25:46.

THE words are a conclusion of a notable scheme and draft which Christ gives us of the last judgment. In that day there will be—(1.) A congregation; (2.) A segregation; (3.) A discussion of the cause; (4.) A solemn doom and sentence, both of absolution and condemnation; (5.) And, lastly, execution, without which the whole process of that day would be but a solemn and useless pageantry. The execution is in the text; wherein observe—

First, A distinction of the persons; these and the righteous. See the last sermon on 2 Cor. 5:10.

Secondly, As there are different persons, so different recompenses. See 2 Cor. 5:10.

Thirdly, Observe, these different recompenses are dispensed with respect to the different qualifications and state of the persons judged, as their case shall appear upon trial, according to their works. Some are wicked, and others righteous: God must needs deal differently with them—

1. To show the holiness of his nature. The holy God delighteth in holiness and holy persons, and hateth sin and the workers of iniquity; and therefore will not deal with the one as he dealeth with the other. Both parts of his holiness are spoken of in scripture, his delight in holy things and persons. See the fourth sermon on 2 Cor. 5:10.

2. The righteousness of his government requireth that there should be a different proceeding with the godly and the wicked; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown, whether he hath sown according to the flesh or the spirit; that the fruit of his doings should be given into his bosom. And this, though it be not evident in this life, where good and evil is promiscuously dispensed, because now is the time of God's patience and our trial, yet, in the life to come, when God will judge the world in righteousness, Acts 17:31, it is necessary that it should go well with the good and ill with the bad; or, as the apostle saith, 2 Thes. 1:6, 7, 'It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels.' Mark, both parts of the recompense belong to the righteousness of his government, to give rest to the troubled, as well as tribulation to the troublers. Indeed, with the one he dealeth in strict justice; to the other he

dispenseth a reward of grace. Yet that also belongeth to his righteousness; that is, his new-covenant righteousness; for so it is said, Heb. 6:10, 'God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love;' as he hath bound himself by gracious promise to give life and glory to the penitent, obedient, and faithful.

3. The graciousness of his rewarding mercy and free love to his faithful servants. Though they were involved in the same condemnation with others as to their original and first estate, and the merit of their evil actions, and the constant imperfection of their best works; yet since it was the sincere bent of their hearts to serve and honour God, he will give them a crown of life. They might have perished everlastingly, as others do, if God should enter into a strict judgment with them. But when others receive the fruit of their doings, he dealeth graciously with them, pardoning their failings, and accepting them in the Beloved. God is not bound in justice, from the right and merit of their actions, to reward them that have done him most faithful service, but merely of his grace upon the account of Christ: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Hoping unto the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;' and 2 Tim. 1:18, 'The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day,' namely, when the Lord shall judge the quick and the dead, and shall distribute punishments and rewards. In some measure we see grace here, but never so fully and perfectly as then.

[1.] Partly because now we have not so full a view of our unworthiness as when our actions are scanned, and all things are brought to light whether they be good or evil. And—

[2.] Partly because there is not so full and large a manifestation of God's favour now, as there is in our full and final reward. It is grace

now that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and to take us into his family, and give us some taste of his love, and a right to his heavenly kingdom; but then it is another manner of grace and favour, when our pardon shall be pronounced by our Judge's own mouth, and he shall not only take us into his family, but into his immediate presence and heavenly palace; not only give us a right, but possession: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you;' and shall not only have some remote service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving, and delighting in, and praising of God. This is grace indeed. The grace of God, or his free favour to sinners, is never seen in all its glory or graciousness till then. And it is the more amplified, when we see how God dealeth with others, who as to natural endowments were every way as acceptable as ourselves; and, as to spirituals, grace alone making the difference.

Fourthly, Observe, first, the wicked are described by sins of omission; as ver. 42, 43. Those that have not visited, not clothed, not fed, not harboured; these shall go into everlasting punishment. But the righteous, by their faithfulness in good works, or acts of self-denying obedience, shall go into life eternal.

1. The wicked by their omission of necessary duties. Because we think omissions no sins, or light sins, I shall take this occasion to show the heinousness of them. Sins are commonly distinguished into —(1.) Sins of omission; and (2.) Sins of commission.

[1.] A sin of commission is when we do those things which we ought not to do.

[2.] A sin of omission is when we leave undone those things which we ought to do. But when we look more narrowly into these things, we shall find both in every actual sin; for in that we commit anything

against the law of God, we omit our duty; and the omitting of our duty can hardly fall out but that something is preferred before the love of God; and that is a commission. But yet there is a ground for the distinction; because when anything is directly and formally against the negative precept and prohibition, that is a sin of commission; but when we directly sin against an affirmative precept, that is an omission. An instance we have in Eli and his sons. Eli's sons 'defiled themselves with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,' 1 Sam. 2:22; but Eli himself sinned in that 'he restrained them not,' 1 Sam. 3:13. His sin was an omission; their sin was a commission. Now, that sins of commission may be great sins, appeareth—

(1.) Partly by the nature of them; for there is in them the general nature of all sin. It is ἀνομία, 1 John 3:4, a transgression of a law, or a disobedience to God; and so, by consequence, a contempt of his authority. We cry out upon Pharaoh when we hear him saying. Exod. 5:2, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?' And by interpretation we all say so. This language is in every sin we commit, and in every duty we omit. Our negligence is not simple negligence, but downright disobedience; because it is the breach of an express precept and charge which God hath given us. Now when we make no reckoning of it, we do in effect say, 'Who is the the Lord, that I should obey him?' There may be much disobedience in a bare omission. When Saul had not done what God bade him to do, he telleth him, 'That rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry,' 1 Sam. 15:23; implying that omission to be stubbornness and rebellion, parallel to idolatry and witchcraft.

(2.) By the causes. In the general, corrupt nature; but the particular causes are—

(1st.) Idleness. They do not stir up themselves, Isa. 64:7.

(2dly.) Security, Jer. 2:31, 32.

(3dly.) Want of love to God: Isa. 43:22, 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel;' Rev. 2:4, 'Nevertheless I have something against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' And—

(4thly.) Zeal for his glory: 'Not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,' Rom. 12:11. Where there is a fervour, we cannot be idle and neglectful of our duty.

(3.) By the effects; and they are—

(1st.) Internal. There is a sad withering: 1 Thes. 5:19, 'Quench not the Spirit.' Or—

(2d.) External. It bringeth on many temporal judgments. God puts by Saul from being king for a sin of omission: 1 Sam. 15:11, 'It repenteth me for setting up Saul to be king; for he hath not done the thing which I commanded him.' For this he puts by Eli's house from the priesthood: 1 Sam. 3:13, 'I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' That omission was not total; for he reproveth them, but did not punish them.

(3d.) Eternal: Mat. 25:30, 'Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness.' So Mat. 7:19, 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire;' if it bringeth not forth good fruit, though not bad or poisonous fruit. For these sins Christ condemneth the wicked in the text. By all these arguments it appeareth that sins of omission may be great sins. But—

2. That some sins of omission are greater than others. All are not alike. As—

[1.] The more necessary the duties are: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' &c.; 1 Cor. 16:22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' These are peccata contra remedium, as others are contra officium. By other sins we make the wound; by these we refuse the plaster.

[2.] If the omission be total: Jer. 10:25, 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name;' Ps. 14:2, 'None seeketh after God.'

[3.] If a duty be seasonable; the feeding the hungry, &c., as ver. 44, 'When saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger?' &c.; and 1 John 3:17, 'He that hath this world's good, and seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'

[4.] When it is easy. This is to stand with God for a trifle: Luke 16:24, 'And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' Desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam.

[5.] When convinced: James 4:17, 'Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'

3. In many cases, sins of omission may be more heinous and damning than sins of commission. They are the ruin of the most part of the carnal world. They are described to be 'without God,' Eph. 2:12. Of the wicked within the pale it is said, Ps. 10:3, 4, 'The wicked, through the pride of his heart, will not seek after God; God is not in

all his thoughts.' Of the careless professor, Jer. 2:32, 'My people have forgotten me days without number.' Sins of omission may be more heinous than sins of commission—

[1.] Partly because these harden more. Foul sins scourge the conscience with remorse and shame, but these bring on insensibly slightness and hardness of heart. And therefore Christ saith, 'Publicans and harlots should enter into the kingdom of God' before Pharisees that neglected faith, love, and judgment, Mat. 21:31.

[2.] Partly because omissions make way for commissions: Ps. 16:4, they that 'called not upon God, did eat up his people as bread.' They lie open to gross sins that do not keep the heart tender by a daily attendance upon God. If a man do not that which is good, he will soon do that which is evil. Oh! then, let us bewail our unprofitableness, that we do no more good, that we do so much neglect God, that we do no more edify our neighbour, so that God's best gifts lie idle upon our hands. That child is counted undutiful that doth wrong and beat his father; so also he that giveth him not due reverence. How seldom do we think of God! Every relation puts new duties upon us, but we little regard them; every gift, every talent.

Again, secondly, The godly by their fruitfulness in. good works, and acts of self-denying obedience. They fed, they refreshed, they harboured, they clothed, they visited, ver. 35, 36. The question is not, Have you heard, prayed, preached? These are disclaimed: Mat. 7:22, 'Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity;' Luke 13:26, 'Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets; but he shall say, I

tell you, I know you not; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.' Nay, nor have you believed: James 2:20, 'Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?' No; Christ telleth us of another trial. Well, then, a religion that costs nothing is worth nothing. A notional religion, a word religion, is not a christianity of Christ's making. Surely heaven is worth something, and it will cost us something if we mean to get thither. There is more in these works of costly charity than we usually think of, 1 Tim. 6:18, 19; Luke 16:9; 1 John 4:19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' Hereby; by what? 'If we love not in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth.' Refresh the bowels of the poor, own brethren though with danger of our lives. Heaven is but a fancy to them that will venture nothing for the hopes of it. What have you done to show your thankfulness for so great a mercy tendered to you? A cold belief and a fruitless profession will never yield you comfort. Good words are not dear, and a little countenance given to religion costs no great matter; and therefore do not think that religion lieth only in hearing sermons, or a few cursory prayers and drowsy devotions. We should mind those things about which we shall be questioned at the day of judgment. Have you visited, fed, clothed, harboured, owned the servants of God, when the world hath frowned on them? Comforted them in their distresses? 'Wherein really have you denied yourselves for the hopes of glory?

Fifthly, Observe the notions whereby their different estate in the other world is expressed, punishment and life. See sermon last, on 2 Cor. 5:10.

Sixthly, Observe, eternity is affixed to both; everlasting punishment and eternal life. See last sermon on 2 Cor. 5:10.

Seventhly, Observe, these are spoken of not only as threatened, but executed. When the cause hath been sufficiently tried and cleared, and sentence passed, there will be execution. The execution is certain, speedy, and unavoidable. See last sermon on 2 Cor. 5:10.

Eightly, Observe, sentence is executed on the wicked first. It beginneth with them, for it is said, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.' Now this is not merely because the order of the narration did so require it. See last sermon on 2 Cor. 5:10.

The Use is to press us—(1.) To believe these things; (2.) Seriously to consider of them.

1. To believe them. Most men's faith about the eternal recompenses is but pretended, at best too cold and speculative, an opinion rather than a sound belief, as appeareth by the little fruit and effect that it hath upon us; for if we had such a sight of them as we have of other things, we should be other manner of persons than we are, in all holy conversation and godliness. We see how cautious man is in tasting meat in which he doth suspect harm, that it will breed in him the pain and torments of the stone and gout or cholic; I say, though it be but probable the things will do us any hurt. We know certainly that 'the wages of sin is death,' yet we will be tasting forbidden fruit. If a man did but suspect a house were falling, he would not stay in it an hour. We know for certain that continuance in a carnal estate will be our eternal ruin; yet who doth flee from wrath to come? If we have but a little hope of gain, we will take pains to obtain it. We know that 'our labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Why do we not 'abound in his work'? 1 Cor. 15:58. Surely we would do more to prevent this misery, to obtain this happiness, when we may do it upon such easy terms, and have so fair an opportunity in our hands; if we were not

strangely stupefied, we would not go to hell to save ourselves a labour. There are two things which are very wondrous:—

[1.] That any should suspect the christian faith, so clearly promised in the predictions of the prophets before it was set afoot, and confirmed with such a number of miracles after it was set afoot; received among the nations with so universal a consent in the learned part of the world, notwithstanding the meanness of the instruments first employed in it, and perpetuated to us throughout so many successions of ages, who have had experience of the truth and benefit of it;—that now in the latter end of time, any should suspect this faith, and think it a fond credulity, is a wonder indeed.

[2.] But a greater wonder by far is it that any should embrace the christian faith and yet live sinfully; that they should believe as christians, and yet live as atheists. You cannot drive a dull ass into the fire that is kindled before him: 'Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.' How can men believe eternal torments, and yet with so much boldness and easiness run into the sins that do deserve them? Many times they are not compelled by any terror, nor asked by any tempter, nor invited by any temptation; but of their own accord seek out occasions of their ruin. On the other side, can a man believe heaven and do nothing for it? If we know that it will not be lost labour, there is all the reason we should not grudge at it.

2. Seriously consider of these things. The scripture everywhere calleth for consideration: Ps. 50:22, 'Consider this, ye that forget God;' Isa. 1:3, 'My people will not consider.' Many that have faith do not set it a-work by lively thoughts. Knowledge is asleep, and differeth little from ignorance and oblivion, till consideration awaken it. If we were at leisure to think of eternity, it would do us good to think of this double motive—that every man must be judged to

everlasting joy or everlasting torment. These things are propounded for our benefit and instruction. We are guarded on both sides; we have the bridle of fear and the spur of hope. If God had only terrified us from sin by mentioning inexpressible pains and horrors, we might be frightened, and stand at a distance from it; but when we have such encouragements to good, and God propoundeth such unspeakable joys, this should quicken our diligence. If God had only promised heaven, and threatened no hell, wicked men would count it no great matter to lose heaven, provided that they might be annihilated; but seeing there is both, and both for ever, shall we be cold and dead? We are undone for ever if wicked, blessed for ever if godly. What should we not do that we may be everlastingly blessed, and avoid everlasting misery?

Well, then, let this be considered by us seriously and often and deeply, that everlasting woe and weal is in the case. Meat well chewed nourisheth the more, but being swallowed whole breedeth crudities; so when we swallow truths without rumination or consideration, we do not feel the virtue of them; they do not excite our diligence, nor break the force of temptations: 'Oh! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end,' Deut. 32:29. I have read of a prodigal prince, that when he had given away a huge sum of money, they laid all the money into a heap before him, that he might see and consider what he had given away, to bring him to retract, or in part to lessen the grant. So it is good for us to consider what we lose in losing eternity, what we part with for these vile and perishing things.

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